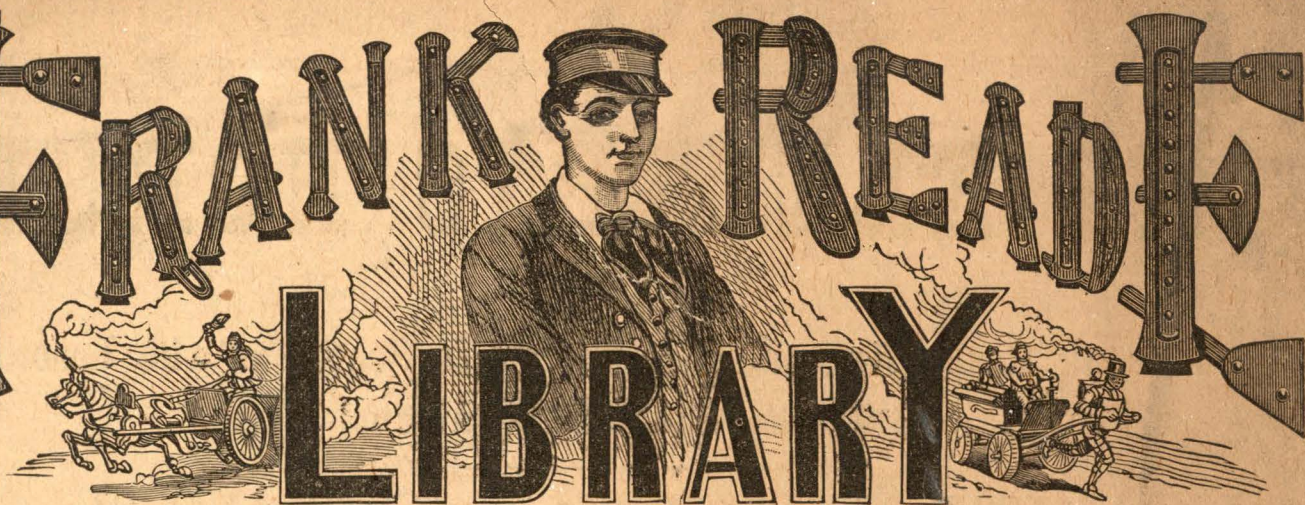


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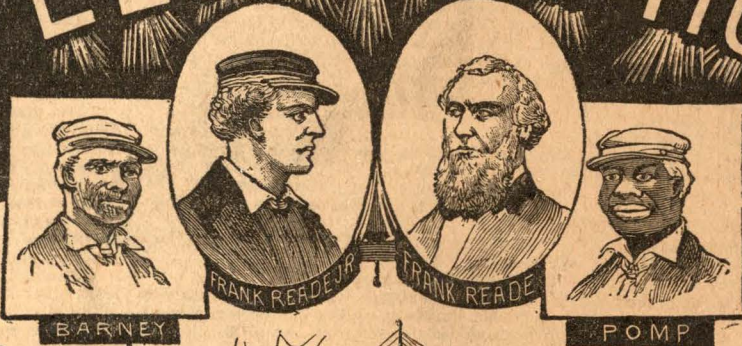
FRANK TOUSEY, PUBLISHER, 34 & 36 NORTH MOORE STREET, NEW YORK.
New York, June 10, 1893.

{ PRICE
5 CENTS. }

Vol. II

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THE ELECTRIC HORSE



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THE ELECTRIC HORSE;

OR,

Frank Reade, Jr., and His Father in Search of the Lost Treasure of the Peruvians.

A STORY OF ADVENTURES IN SOUTH AMERICA.

By "NONAME,"

Author of "Fighting the Slave Hunters; or, Frank Reads, Jr., in North Australia," etc., etc., etc.

CHAPTER I.

FRANK AND HIS FATHER—THE ANCIENT CIPHER.

"You don't mean it, father?"

"Yes I do, my boy. I'm not as young as I was when I astonished the world with The Steam Horse, but I'm good for another trip."

"You had better give up the idea, father."

"No, my mind is made up."

"Well, when you speak that way—"

"You understand, I'm in earnest."

"But, father, at your age—"

"I'm younger in feelings than half the boys, thanks to a good constitution. I've always wanted to explore South America, Frank."

"Well, I can say no more to dissuade you."

"No, I tell you, Frank, my lad, I feel that I don't want to rust out here in Readestown in my old age, and have no personal experience with our last and greatest scientific wonder."

"Well, I can't blame you."

"I am sure you cannot."

"You know, father, I shall be delighted to have you accompany me on my proposed trip. It was only my solicitude for your safety and comfort that caused me to try to argue you out of the notion."

"I understand that, Frank. You've a good heart, and you've always been a good son."

"Well, father, you are fully satisfied with the result of our united efforts during the past years. You think we can make no further improvements on our Electric Horse?"

"No. What one has not thought of the other has. This last invention is the supreme triumph of our lives. With the Electric Horse having made one good journey I'll be satisfied to rest on my laurels, Frank."

"And you deserve to do so."

"Well, I'm inclined to think so, too, Frank. What time have you? I see my watch has stopped."

"It's a quarter past ten."

"Well, you know the doctor promised to call over and see the Electric Horse this morning. If he is coming it is about time he was here."

"Yes."

"I tell you, Frank, I regard Dr. Vaneyke as a real acquisition to Readestown society. You know he is a naturalist, a man of education, and he has been a great traveler."

"Yes, and he has told me that he spent two years traveling in South America."

"I know that. It was somewhere on the pampas of Peru or Brazil that he picked up Corrajo the gaucho."

"Quite right."

"The doctor would be a good man to have with us in South America, father, and the gaucho or herdsman and hunter of the pampas would be invaluable to us."

"That's a fact. I wish we could induce them to accompany us."

"So do I, and I know Corrajo is anxious to return to his own country."

"But he won't leave his master."

"No; Corrajo is devoted to the doctor."

"And you know the doctor has told us that he has settled down for good here in Readestown, where he bought a fine place while you were off in Australia with the Electric Man."

"Yes, I am aware that the old naturalist says that, but I've an idea, father."

"What is it?"

"You know the doctor has a weakness for the solution of scientific puzzles, historical enigmas and the like."

"Certainly. Why, in his splendid collection of natural curiosities I've seen ancient pottery, slabs of stones from the temples of the Incas covered with strange inscriptions, similar objects and stone writings from India, Egypt and other portions of the world."

"If we could only get him interested—"

"In that ancient cipher of yours?"

"Yes. Then he might be induced to go with us and assist us in the search we propose to make."

"For the lost treasure of the Peruvians."

"Or, possibly, it may prove to be the Brazilians."

"True enough. But let us have another look at the cipher."

"All right, father, here it is."

It is not necessary to introduce the two persons whose conversation has just been recorded. Every one must recognize Frank Reade, Jr., and his father.

Of course the place was Readestown. Just about a year ago Frank Reade, Jr., returned from Australia, after making his successful trip through that country.

When Frank reached home he found his father hard at work on a new invention, with which the old gentleman meant to surprise his son. He tried to keep it a secret from Frank, Jr., but the latter's curiosity was excited and he found out what his father was up to.

Then the two put their heads together and the result was the Electric Horse, after months of study and diligent experiment and labor.

We have seen the great inventor and scientist and his son were well satisfied with the outcome of their efforts.

The achievements and adventures which they were yet to accomplish and encounter were destined to throw all their previous experiences in the shade and far surpass them.

Barney and Pomp had safely packed and shipped the electric man for Readestown, and they reached home before the machine did, though that came all right.

As Frank, Jr., last spoke, he drew from his pocket a cube of peculiar looking metal—a sort of bronze with light streaks through it—and handed it to his father.

"And so that's the cube with the ancient cipher on it, which Horace Hastings, your old college friend, gave you on his death bed."

"Yes, that's the ancient cipher supposed to reveal the site of a hidden treasure of the Peruvians. At least poor Horace believed so, though you know that I think the treasure may have belonged to the ancient Brazilians."

"Yes, but—"

Frank's father paused as there came a tap at the door.

"Come," he said.

The door opened.

A fine looking gentleman, past middle age, whose snow-white hair was brushed back from a broad intellectual brow, and whose dark eyes, seen through his gold-rimmed spectacles beamed pleasantly, entered.

"Good-morning, gentlemen," said Doctor Vaneyke.

"Good-morning, doctor. We were just speaking of you," responded Mr. Reade, Sr.

"And wondering if you were not coming over to-day," said Frank, Jr.

As he spoke he placed a chair for the naturalist, for the scene was the library of the Reade mansion.

"You may be sure, gentlemen, that I am so deeply interested in your last great invention that nothing could induce me to forego the pleasure of examining it and hear you explain its mechanism," replied Doctor Vaneyke.

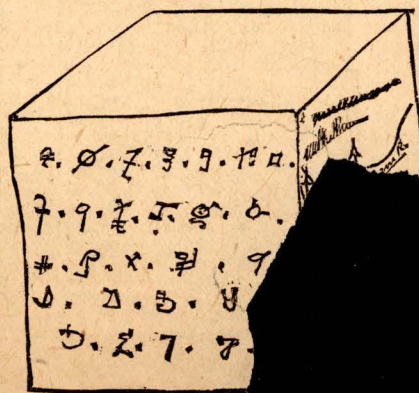
His accent was peculiar and pleasant.

He was a Prussian, and he had acquired a knowledge of almost every known language. His own dialect, as he said himself, was so lost and mingled with scraps and fragments caught from other languages that no one could tell his nationality from hearing him speak.

Frank caught his father's eye and gave him a sly signal.

The young inventor meant to entrap the naturalist for a *companion de voyage*.

Mr. Reade, Sr., understood Frank, Jr. He carelessly placed the cube on which the strange cipher was inscribed on the table.



THE CIPHER

The old inventor placed the cube in such a position that it was easy to see it, as soon as he entered the room.

"Well, doctor, I am very glad to go with him to South America."

"And what do you agree with me in this way of a course?"

The doctor had just sighted the cube.

"Well, yes, rather. But I was about to say Frank has come round. He's glad enough to have me go with him, only he isn't sure the trip won't prove too much for me."

"Where did you get this cube?" asked the doctor. He had polished the glasses of his spectacles on a silk handkerchief, and he was regarding the cipher traced upon one side of the cube with some excitement and the greatest interest.

"I shall trap him through his interest in this ancient enigma," thought Frank.

Then he said:

"I'll tell you all about it. That cube came from South America. It was brought to this country by the sailor brother of a college friend of mine. The sailor fished the cube from an ancient tomb in Peru."

"Are you aware that this is a remarkable relic?"

"Yes. The college friend who, dying, gave it to me, said it was of great antiquity."

"There's no doubt of that. But tell me, have you ever been able to make anything out of the singular inscription on one side of the cube, which certainly must be a cipher?"

"Well, I haven't been able to read it, but the man who found it in South America thought it was the key to the hiding place of a lost treasure of the Peruvians."

"Ah! Hem! And the map traced here on the opposite side of the cube. What's that? As I live, the Spanish words, which translated mean 'treasures of gold,' said Doctor Vaneyke, pointing to a rude map which any one could have traced on the cube with a sharp instrument."

This map showed part of both Peru and Brazil as the names of mountains and rivers written in ancient Spanish, told.

Among the mountains of Peru there was drawn a spear. Dotted lines ran from this spear to another drawn on the map far away on the mighty Amazon.

Along the dotted lines connecting the two spears were the Spanish words meaning "treasures of gold," and directly under them, written in Latin, were directions which, translated, read:

"Read the secret writing of the Franciscans; therein is the secret of the lost treasure."

"Yes, I am sure, doctor, that the lost treasure is hidden somewhere in Peru or Brazil, along those dotted lines, and with our Electric Horse father and myself propose to explore the country and seek for the treasure," said Frank.

"This singular affair interests me. The writing of the cipher is not Greek or Latin?"

"No, I'm a little rusty in my Latin and Greek, but I knew as soon as Frank showed me the cipher that it was neither," said Mr. Reade, Sr.

"Well, I've made a study of such things, and it's my idea that the singular characters were invented for cipher writing. The word Franciscan gives me the idea."

"How so?"

"You must know the Jesuit and Franciscan fathers obtained the confidence of their converts among the native rulers of Peru and Brazil. The missionaries had preceded the Conquistadores in the country, and when the people of Spanish blood in the days of their grandeur and glory subdued Peru, and Brazil in part, we know that the natives concealed their treasure, their wonderful mines and temples filled with gold."

"Ah, and you think the natives may have confided the secret of the hiding-place of some great treasure to the Franciscan priest?" asked Frank, Jr.

"Yes, particularly as my researches have given me the information that in the days of the Spanish conquerors the Franciscans used a secret writing, or cipher, known only to their priests of the highest order. The characters in this ancient cipher are precisely similar to copies of the secret writings of the friars found on the rocks of the Cordilleras, the Peruvian Andes."

"Then you may yet study it out."

"Yes, I am pretty well satisfied that I have hit upon the truth. Some old Franciscan friar recorded on this metal cube the secret which some ruler of the country had confided to him. By some fatality the friar died without making known his secret. The cube concealed in the lining of his clothing, perhaps, was buried with him."

"That would explain everything."

"Yes."

"When do you start for South America, Frank?"

"As soon as Barney Shea arrives."

"Well, Frank, if you can find room for me I should like to go along and help solve the mystery of this ancient cipher."

CHAPTER II.

THE ELECTRIC HORSE—BARNEY'S "RUCTION."

FRANK READE, JR., was simply delighted.

"Good enough, doctor!" he exclaimed.

"Put it there," he added, and he grasped the old naturalist's hand and pressed it warmly.

"We couldn't be better pleased," said Mr. Reade, Sr.

"And you are conferring a great pleasure on me by permitting me to accompany you. I assure you I highly appreciate the honor of making one of the party to explore South America with your wonderful Electric Horse."

"Well, we're all suited," said Frank's father.

"Yes, and now let's go out to the work-shop and have a look at the horse," said the young man himself.

"By all means. That's what I came for."

Frank led the way from the house.

"By the way, you said you were a-going to start for South America as soon as the Irishman, Barney Shea, arrived. Where is he—and when do you expect him here?" asked the doctor, as they went along.

"Barney had to return to Ireland to look after some business. Mrs. Shea didn't go with him, and she told me yesterday that she had just received a dispatch from Barney which informed her he was safely back in New York, and that he was coming straight on home."

"Then he may come at almost any time."

"Yes," assented Frank.

"He might even arrive to-day," said his father.

"That's true."

"Hello! There's Pomp!"

"Yes. You remember you told him yesterday that I would explain the Electric Horse to-day, father. We have already tested it."

"So I did."

Pomp, the black dead shot, who, with Barney Shea, had shared so many perilous journeys with Frank Reade, Jr., and his father, met them a moment later.

The darky looked as comical and good-natured as when we saw him last.

If anything he had grown a little more corpulent.

"Well, Mars Reade, is yer gwine fer to work dat new trabin' machine, de Electric Hoss, dis mornin'?" asked Pomp, with a grin.

"Yes. We're going down to the workshop now."

"Dat's de cheese! I'se gettin' homesick an' losin' flesh all long of pinin' for a change. We'se all done too much skylarkin' all ober de world fo' to sot down an' raise pumpkins fo' a livin', sah."

"You see we've spoilt Pomp as well as Barney," said Frank.

"Yes, Frank, they've both got the traveling fever as we have," assented Mr. Reade, Sr.

"By the way, who is that strange-looking man?" asked Dr. Vaneyke.

They all glanced in a direction he indicated.

A tall, lank-looking man, with a shrewd face and yellow hair, stood at the gate.

He was observing the Reades and their friends closely.

But as soon as he saw them looking at him he moved on.

"I don't know who he is," said Frank.

"He's a stranger to me," Mr. Reade, Sr., volunteered.

"Looks like a Down-east Yankee, sah," said Pomp.

"So he does," assented Frank.

"I've seen him around town for several days," the doctor stated.

"No doubt he sought to get a good look at us. Strangers who visit Readestown always seem to regard father and I as natural curiosities," said Frank, laughing.

"The penalty of fame, my friend," answered the doctor.

"I done thought dat man was a visitor of yours, Mars Reade," said Pomp, pointing at the retreating form of the Yankee.

"Why, what put that idea into your head?" Frank asked.

"Case I done seed him loafin' round the workshop yesterday."

Frank started.

"Is that a fact, Pomp?" asked his father.

"Certain sure, Mars Reade."

Frank and his father exchanged meaning glances.

"Well, here we are at the work-shop," said the latter.

"If you see that fellow around here again send him about his business," said Frank, Jr.

"I'll do that, Mars Frank. You jiss say de word an' I'll butt dat yallar-haired trash clean ober de fence."

"You haven't gotten over your butting proclivities?"

"No, sah! I hasn't had no chance to butt since we got back from de las' trip. I'se achin' all ober fer a chance to lift suffin, sah."

"Well, were a-goin' to South America, and you'll have a chance again down there."

"Golly, Mars Frank, you mos' done took my breff. Deed yer did, honey. Wake up de banjo! I'se tickled mos' to deff, I is, suah!"

"I thought you'd want to go."

"Is the Irishman agoin' too, sah?"

"Yes. We couldn't do without Barney."

"No, dat's a fac'. Yah! What a coon dat am on de fight. Whisky an' fightin' is what dem St. Patrick's men is raised on frum the cradle. When does yer 'spec Barney?"

"Any time now."

Meanwhile, Mr. Reade, Sr. had unlocked the door, and now he entered the building in the rear of the grounds about his mansion, where the inventors had fitted up a complete work-shop and scientific laboratory.

Inside the door Dr. Vaneyke involuntarily paused.

He was filled with astonishment and admiration at what he saw.

"Is that the wonderful Electric Horse?" he asked.

He pointed at a beautiful metallic horse of colossal size which stood like a statue wrought by the hand of some wonderful sculptor, in the center of the room.

"That is the Electric Horse himself, doctor," answered Frank.

"Aye, and a triumph of metallic architecture it is."

"You flatter us, doctor."

"Not at all. I see that its several component parts consist of the finest steel, iron, copper and brass. The castings are simply perfect. But can you really endow that wonderful metallic figure with the power of motion?"

"Certainly. You observe that this metal steed corresponds in every joint to the real living animal he represents."

"Yes."

"Very well. Those joints are all perfectly constructed for easy and noiseless movement, and each is provided with rubber guards and washers so as to obviate the possibility of friction which would generate heat and prove destructive."

"I comprehend."

"I am sure you do. Now you will notice that the rods which pass from joint to joint are of finest tempered steel and their hinge attachments render them flexible at such points as correspond with the joints of the metal steed."

"Wonderful!"

"Now then, of course, the entire horse is hollow. The motive power is electricity, that supreme power of nature whose unlimited resources and possibilities as applicable to the inventions of men are not yet fully understood. Inside the copper belly of the horse is placed the delicate, but at the same time simple mechanism by means of which the limbs of the metal animal are worked just the same as though he was gifted with life."

"A great idea, a very great idea."

"Indeed, Doctor, you may liken the machinery placed in the horse's belly and the wires, rods, bars, and the like connecting it with a powerful double electric battery placed within a metal case in the front of the vehicle to which the horse is attached, to the heart, the nerves, arteries and blood-vessels of the living animal."

"The analogy is quite evident."

"The engineer seated within the vehicle controls the movements of the horse as easily as though it ran by steam."

"The great improvement is that by the substitution of electricity you avoid the difficulties of a furnace, boilers and fuel."

"Yes, now there is another point. By reversing the lever which regulates the application of electric power from the battery to the machinery within the horse, the action of the entire mechanical system is also reversed."

"And in that way you get a retrograde motion?"

"Yes, and back the horse."

"And to turn?"

"I shut off the electricity on one side of the horse. That throws the action on the opposite side, and a simple clock-work system, to which attachment is made through the electric current by lowering the knob marked 'A' yonder, produces a leverage action which swings the horse around or turns him gently as you apply the power."

"You seem to have forgotten nothing."

"And, moreover, in order to guard against the calamity which would ensue should the battery be rendered useless through any accident, as I stated, it is double. I shall not ordinarily use more than one of the batteries. The one not in

use is inside a miniature safe, where it will be secure from any possible accident. The second battery is concealed under the first in such a manner that no one would suspect its presence who was not previously informed regarding it."

"I suppose you generate your own light."

"Yes. The light is the most brilliant in the world. A dazzling electric illumination. It will flash from the eyes of the horse and from a globe above the head of the engineer."

"But is there no danger that the horse will slip."

"No; he is sharp shod, and he can race up and down hill without the slightest peril."

"Well, I think I understand about the horse. Now explain that strange-looking vehicle to which he is attached. Why, it must be at least twenty feet long."

"So it is, doctor. You have guessed the length exactly. It is just twenty feet in length."

"Hello! Why, here's Barney?" exclaimed Mr. Reade, Sr., in surprise.

At that moment the door had opened and given admission to Barney Shea.

"Whist! It's meself as is ready to jump out av me shoes for joy to git back to yez. But put off greetin's till yez witness the most illigant ruction yez have feasted your eyes on for many a day. Whisper! Kape mum and watch for fun!" said Barney, in a low, earnest voice, as though he was really afraid some one would overhear him.

Frank and his father looked perplexed. They couldn't understand what the jolly Irishman was up to now.

"Take dis chille's word, dat Irishman am drunk," said Pomp, sagely.

"Fhat does the nagur say? Bedad, is it foight he wants av me? Arrah, let me at him! I'll bate the head av him!"

Barney threw off his coat and spit on his hands.

Pomp ducked his head about and seemed to be getting up steam to butt Barney out of time.

"Let dat Irishman go! Luff him run agin dis brunette gemman's pile-driver once. Dat 'ull knock de whiskey out av him," sneered Pomp.

"Hold on here! Hold on both of you, I say! Can't you behave yourselves? You haven't met for months. Must the first thing be a fight?" cried Frank, Jr.

"The nagur insulted me, bedad!"

"Doan' you call me names! I wan' you to understand that. I didn't go fur to 'sult you. What's de matter wid yer?"

"That's all right, be gob. Jist you hold yez gab, me gosssoon, an' hev the extreme neatness to look out for the illigant ruction I spoke av."

All was silent while they watched Barney as he stole along the side of the room.

Suddenly he dashed open a door and plunged through it, and shouted:

"Arrah, yez thief av the world, it's now I has yez! Come out o' this an' I'll bate the head av yez! Come out, ye yellow-headed spalpeen. Come out forninst an illigant gentleman from the county of Clonakilla, bad cess to yez!"

CHAPTER III.

THE WONDERFUL WAGON DRAWN BY THE ELECTRIC HORSE—THE INVENTORS IN BRAZIL.

"BARNEY has gone mad, father!" cried Frank, Jr.

"I think so myself," the old gentleman assented.

Then they all ran forward to the door through which Barney had disappeared, and they were just in time to see the Irishman haul the tow-headed Yankee they had observed watching them from the gate, out from behind a pile of lumber near an open window.

The next moment Barney and the Yankee clinched.

They slung each other around, and finally went down on the floor in a rough and tumble scrimmage.

"The devil fly away wid yez! Shades o' Tipperary, but I'll make an illigant funeral av ye, ye yaller-headed spalpeen!" roared Barney.

"Golly, Mars Frank, dat's de same feller I done seed round heah afore. Yes, sah, an' he am de same feller what went by de gate," said Pomp.

"That's so," assented Frank, Jr.

"Dat feller weren't heah for no good, sah."

"I'm sure of that."

"I see gwine fo' to help Barney, an' we'll rest dat feller for a bugler!"

"Go in, Pomp," Frank, Jr., answered.

Pomp started to Barney's assistance.

"I see comin', Irish! Jiss lift yahself to one side, an' gib dis batterin' ram a chance to rise de bugler!" cried Pomp, ducking his head.

But just then the Yankee managed to scramble to his feet.

He broke away from the Irishman, and made for the open window.

Pomp darted after him, and at the same time Barney scrambled up.

Barney and the darky accidentally collided, and the butt Pomp meant for the Yankee was received by poor Barney, who doubled himself up on the floor like a jack-knife.

Pomp caught the Yankee by the back of the neck and the slack of his pantaloons, just as he reached the window, and pitched him through it head first.

The Yankee came upon his feet and ran for it. Barney got his breath back, and made a run for the window.

He saw the Yank disappearing over the hill. Then his Irish was up and he turned on Pomp.

"Ye blind, blunderin', stumblin' baboon yez! Ye hav' spoilt me illigant ruction wid de Yank intirely, but, begob! I'll take it out av yez. Show me the nagur as kin stan' afore Barney Shea. Yez took me foul, ye black spalpeen, an' now it's batin' the big head av yez I'm afther doin'!"

Barney squared himself and danced around Pomp as though prancing on a hot iron, and he let out a few wild Irish yells that would have been a credit to a real Tipperary fair row.

Pomp stood on the defensive, and he was waiting for a chance to butt Barney again, when Frank and his father both interposed, and the belligerent Irishman was quieted down. Then he shook hands with Pomp and everything was lovely between them again.

"Ye see I'm afther jist arrivin', an' on me way here fat did I soy but the yaller-headed rascal crawlin' in at the windy," explained Barney.

"And you meant to surprise him and us?"

"That's it, Master Frank, and but for the nagur, bad—"

"That will do, Barney."

"It's glad I am to see ye all. An' so that's the illigant Electric Hoss yez was writing me av. Be gob, he's a beauty. An' I'm to go wid yez to South America? Faith an' it's a happy man I am this day."

"I don't doubt that, Barney. Nobody but a sneaking spy who wanted to steal our ideas would have crawled into our work-shop as the Yankee did, and I am not sorry he was handled roughly," said Mr. Reade, Sr.

"That's true for ye, sur."

"Now come back to the invention. I've written you all about it, Barney, but I want to make some further explanations for the benefit of our friend Dr. Vaneyke," said Frank, Jr.

They returned to the front room of the work-shop.

After Barney had expressed his admiration for the wonderful Electric Horse in a characteristic way, Frank, Jr., said:

"Now, doctor, to explain the vehicle to which the Electric Horse is attached. It is almost complete, and you can understand everything about it now. You have guessed its length—twenty feet," said Frank, Jr.

"Now Barney and Pomp take your places," he added.

The Irishman and the darky promptly entered the vehicle through the rear door.

Frank followed them, and a moment afterwards reappeared on top of the vehicle. Standing there, he went on to explain the wonderful carriage, while Mr. Reade, Sr., and the doctor stood by and contemplated the great invention in unbounded admiration.

"Now you will follow me while I designate its principal peculiarities," said Frank, Jr.

"Yes, certainly."

"To begin with, the four wheels are made of iron, and provided with tires six inches in width, so they cannot sink in soft earth readily."

"So I see, and the vehicle is about eight feet high, with a flat top, surrounded by a hand-rail, like a deck on shipboard."

"Yes, and that is really the 'deck' of my carriage. You see, doctor, the sides and ends inclosing the vehicle are composed of wood plated with sheet iron secured with copper rivets. The plates are perforated all over like a sieve, with round holes, which are small, and so arranged that they afford ventilation and protection at the same time for the occupants of the vehicle."

"Which is now closed?"

"Yes, but I will open it and show you an improvement on any vehicle we have heretofore invented."

The succeeding moment, not a little to the doctor's astonishment, half the rear half of the side of the carriage toward him swung upward on hinges placed at its top and remained in an upright position, thus forming an adjustable side, or bulwark, for the deck, or top of the vehicle. Through a loosely woven netting of wire Frank and the rear half of the interior of the vehicle could be plainly seen. Above the rear axle was a brake-wheel like that on the rear of a fire-ladder truck. Leading up to the roof was a flight

of spiral stairs ending at a small trap-door. At the rear brake sat Barney, and Pomp occupied a driver's box in front of the engineer's stand.

"You see," said Frank, "when we desire extra ventilation inside, or wish to obtain a breastwork for the deck, all we have to do is to raise the side. The brake here controls the rear axle and enables the long vehicle to turn corners swiftly. The stairs give us the means of ascending to the roof without going outside."

"Admirable!" said the doctor.

Then Frank raised the front side of the carriage and disclosed the engineer's seat, surrounded by handles of polished metal and projecting knobs, all lettered or numbered, which controlled the motive power of the electric wonder. Raised from the top of the roof was a pedestal just over the engineer's stand, and this was surmounted by the globe for the electric light. At the rear end of the roof arose a frame in which a beautiful silver bell was suspended. Adjustable bunks which folded down and formed part of the floor when not in use were arranged on the sides of the vehicle. Suspended under the floor was the locker for the reception of the needed supplies and everything necessary to be carried.

"This time the size of our vehicle will enable us to carry all the provisions, water and chemicals, and the like, as well as my scientific outfit which we need for a long trip. In this box, just forward of the engineer's seat, you will find among a variety of appliances, and implements, and tools for repairing the machinery, also a collection of scientific articles such as a telescope, a compass, a huge burning glass, an electric saw, a number of steel-pointed drills for drilling rock and mining purposes which can be worked by electricity. A small balloon for making 'captive ascensions' to take observations at great distances. Electric torpedoes for blasting, and two suits of chain-armor for father and I, and other articles which I need not enumerate," said Frank.

"What are those round brass plates along the side of the vehicle? I see that they are placed about on a level with the top of the wheels?" asked the doctor.

"You shall see," replied Frank, and pulling a lever, he caused the brass plates to move aside and disclose the port-holes of a concealed electric battery of Winchester rifles placed in a narrow compartment between the bottom floor and the supply locker.

"There are six rifles on each side and they can be discharged simultaneously, by merely lowering the bar which applies the electric current to their mechanism," explained Frank.

"One question more, Frank. How fast can you travel with your Electric Horse and carriage?"

"Ordinary speed on level country, twenty to twenty-five miles an hour, though we shall go much slower, so as to observe the country."

"Faster if necessary, I presume?"

"Yes, perhaps thirty to thirty-five miles an hour, and even more than that."

"You have surpassed all your previous efforts. I congratulate you and your father most sincerely," said the doctor, earnestly.

The next day the machinery was carefully taken apart, the sections of the metal horse unjointed and everything packed securely and carefully in cases provided for the purpose, and shipped by rail to New York.

The exploring party started a few days later, and it consisted of Mr. Reade, Sr., Frank, Jr., Dr. Vaneyke, Barney, Pomp and Corrajo, the gaucho. He is mentioned last, but he is by no means the least important member of the party, as we shall yet see.

The party reached New York in safety, and took passage on board a fast steamer for Para, Brazil. The Electric Horse was shipped on the same vessel, which was bound finally for Rio Janeiro. In New York the Reades completed making such purchases as they thought necessary. The voyage was a pleasant and entirely uneventful one, and the explorers, with all the cases containing the Electric Horse and wagon and the scientific appliances, were landed in the old Brazilian city of Para, on the river of the same name, which is a tributary to the Amazon.

A vacant building near the wharf was secured by the party, and there the Electric Horse and Wagon was unpacked and put together. Meanwhile, while Frank, Jr., superintended this work Mr. Reade, Sr., presented letters of introduction to the American consul and the authorities. Dom Pedro, the Emperor of Brazil, was in Para, and when informed of the project of the great American inventors, he not only readily gave them permission to go where they would through his empire, but expressed a wish to witness the start of the wonderful Electric Horse on his adventurous expedition.

To please the Emperor the Reades hurried mat-

ters up, and in a few days the start for the interior of the great Amazon valley was made.

It was a bright and beautiful morning when the Electric Horse emerged upon the street drawing the wonderful carriage with stately tread. One-half of the perforated sides were raised, showing Barney at the rear brake. On deck stood Frank, Jr., with his hand upon a lever which passed up through the floor and by means of which he controlled the movements of the Electric Horse. About Frank, Jr. were grouped his father, Dr. Vaneyke and Corrajo, the gaucho. Pomp was seated on the driver's box, and in his hands he held a pair of gayly colored reins. This was an idea of Frank, Jr.'s to heighten the illusion of actual life in the metal horse. The stars and stripes and the Brazilian flag crossed, floated from above the globe for the electric light.

The streets were thronged with people and from every window and balcony fair ladies waved their handkerchiefs, while cheers of admiration from the populace greeted the advance of the inventors at every step.

Dom Pedro, the emperor, himself looked on with wonder from the porch of an imperial palace.

CHAPTER IV.

IN THE VALLEY OF THE AMAZON.

THE start from Para was a most auspicious beginning of the great expedition of Frank Reade, Jr. and his father.

As they proceeded they found that their last and most wonderful invention fully sustained all the hopes they entertained for it. The great Electric Horse was true to the promises previous tests, to which it had been carefully subjected, had made.

Our adventurers skirted along the southern bank of the Para river, and as the country was open, provided with excellent highways and populated by friendly and civilized Brazilians, they proceeded rapidly.

"Be me soul," said Barney one morning several days later when they had crossed the Cameta river—sometimes called the Tocantins—and were entering the great valley of the Amazon, proper, "but this is a wonderful foine country, so it is. Bates Mexico elane. Would yez look at the trees av it! Bedad they forgot to stop growin' it's meself is thinkin'."

Barney was lost for a moment in wonder and admiration at the panorama of natural beauty and tropical luxuriance spread out all around him, but presently he added:

"Be gorra, do ye moid the clump av trees wid umbrellas on top av 'em? Bedad it would take two men an' a boy to look to the top av thim!"

The wondering Irishman pointed to an adjacent group of tall Brazilian palms.

"Umbrellas! Dat Irisher got no sense. Dem yah trees wouldn't keep de rain off—no, sah," remarked Pomp, taking a practical application of the subject.

"Is it the nagur that's afther givin' pointers? Faith, an' it's meself made many an umbrella out av the same at home in Clonakilty, Ireland."

"Dat's good. Palms in Ireland! What am yer gibbin' us?"

Everybody laughed.

Barney saw he had made an oversight, but he didn't like to have Pomp get the laugh on him.

"Is it doubtin' me word ye are? Be gob, Dr. Vaneyke, if yez will have the extrame politeness to hould me coat—"

"That will do, Barney," admonished Frank, Jr., reprovingly, and the Irishman subsided, and Pomp was the author of a delighted grin which displayed a double row of ivories clear across his face.

"But, really, there is some truth in what Barney said," remarked the old naturalist.

"How is that, doctor?" asked Mr. Reade, Sr.

"Why, these palms are sometimes called umbrella-trees."

"Listen to the likes of that, will ye, darkness?" said Barney, with an exultant look at Pomp.

"And wid those trees actually shed rain?" inquired Frank, Jr.

"Indeed they will, that is, provided it doesn't rain too hard."

"Nature has provided wonders here. Everything is interesting," said Mr. Reade, Sr., seriously.

Well might he affirm this.

The Amazon valley was indeed a wonder-land, the heaven of the ornithologist and botanist. Its animals are the most beautiful to be found on the face of the globe, its vegetation the most profuse and remarkable.

"But amid all the beauty there are many dangers," said Corrajo, the gaucho.

"Dangers, is it? Thin the chance fur an

illigant ruction I take it, be gob. But fat are the dangers? Are there any wild nagurs here to have a bit av a shindy wid, sur?" asked Barney.

The gaucho smiled quietly as he replied:

"Dangers. Ah, yes. The Brazilian savages of the interior are fierce and war-like. They resent any intrusion into their domain, and hesitate not to attack travelers."

"Let thim come! It batin' the heads av the spalpeens I'll be afther doin' of they come forninst us," replied Barney, in a belligerent way.

"The Amazon valley is the gaucho's home, with all its perils it is by him beloved. Each plain and forest, the wide, wide pampas, the grand rivers, the fierce animals, everything in *el grande country* is dear to Corrajo," said the gaucho fervently.

As he spoke he gazed around him with delight depicted upon every feature of his bronzed face, and drew the air of his native land into his broad chest with great deep breaths, seeming to derive new animation from each inspiration.

The party were all on the deck or roof of the wonderful carriage drawn by the giant Electric Horse.

Frank, Jr., had just turned off the motive power of the powerful battery, and the colossal steed of metal stood on the grand pampas as motionless as a gigantic statue of some mammoth equine of forgotten ages.

The young inventor had stopped the horse, that the party might take a deliberate view of their interesting surroundings.

All the party regarded Corrajo with admiration as he stood erect and confident, surveying the land he knew so well.

And the gaucho or hunter of the pampas was well worthy of admiration.

He was finely formed, a little above the medium height, with strong and sinewy arms, and lithe and agile limbs. His eyes were keen, his bronzed features pleasing and honest in expression, and in fact his whole *personnelle* conveyed to the beholder at once the idea of courage and intelligence.

In very truth the Brazilian possessed these desirable attributes to an eminent degree, as we shall yet see proven.

Corrajo wears a poncho of woolen fabric, woven in stripes of gaudy colors, Zouave breeches reaching below his knees, while his feet and the lower portion of his limbs are encased in horse-hide boots. Upon his head worn gracefully is a broad brimmed hat.

In the gaucho's belt is a long, keen-bladed knife, such as the pampas rovers invariably carry, and which in their hands becomes a weapon of the most formidable character.

Besides his knife, Corrajo has brought with him a number of weapons and implements peculiar to his native land, although they are not now in sight, being stowed away in the interior of the carriage.

The explorers could not have secured in all South America a more valuable acquisition to their party than the gaucho.

His skill as a tracker, a hunter and a guide could not be excelled by any pampas-dweller in all Brazil or the Argentine states.

A moment of silence succeeded the remark last made, and then Frank, Jr., said:

"You speak of dangerous animals. What varieties abound here?"

"There are so many one can scarcely enumerate them. There is the jaguar, the Brazilian tiger, the boa, the peccaries, the giant apes, and so on. But the jaguar is most to be dreaded," replied Corrajo.

"Yes, he is as ferocious as any of the *felis onca*," giving the classical name of the tiger tribe to which the jaguar, puma and the like belong, the old doctor naturalist replied.

"Felix Onca!" exclaimed Barney, laboring under a misapprehension, and he added:

"Felix Onca, is it; sure an it's mesel as never found any av the Onca family so fierce. Indade they lived nixt me father's furrum, an' I bate the head av Felix an' his brother Pat too more than once, bad luck to thim!"

The laugh was on Barney, and he felt that he was an injured man.

"Fat the devil are they laughin' at, I dunno?" he muttered.

Frank Reade, Jr., gave his attention to the surrounding scenery as the conversation went on.

"Observe," said the doctor, "how luxuriant the grass, how profusely abundant every variety of the floral kingdom not found elsewhere on the globe but here."

"And the monkeys!" added Barney.

The great trees were full of chattering, marmoset monkeys, and parakeets of brilliant plumage perched among the boughs. There were other members of the feathered tribe, on wing or at rest everywhere in which the eye glanced,

and the splendor of their coloring surpassed the power of description.

In the distance was heard the voice of the alouatte, or howling monkey. The macaws and parrots screamed among the foliage, and afar off, high above the earth, floated the great South American condor, appearing like a black blotch on the cerulean sky.

It was high noon, and Barney and Pomp set about preparing lunch, which consisted of dried meat and fruits, such as keep well in equatorial climates, and an excellent cup of Java coffee.

Meanwhile everybody save Frank, Jr. had descended from the "deck" of the carriage. The professional naturalist was looking about for botanical specimens, Corrajo had taken his rifle and strolled off in search of game, Mr. Reade, Sr., was reclining in the shade and watching Barney and Pomp as they busied themselves about a fire which they had kindled.

Frank, Jr., had remained on the top of the carriage to tighten some of the screws on the electric lever and oil a joint or two of the machinery in that portion of the wonderful invention.

The Electric Horse and carriage stood directly under the wide-spreading branches of a great tree provided with dense foliage, which screened the young inventor from the warm rays of the noon-day sun.

Frank, Jr., was intent on his work, when suddenly Pomp uttered a yell of terror.

Frank dropped the wrench which he held in his hand, and at almost the same instant he heard a fierce growl above his head.

CHAPTER V.

A FIGHT WITH A JAGUAR.

"Look out, Mars Frank! Dars a tiger goin' to jump down on yer!" yelled Pomp.

The young inventor's eyes were lifted to the branches of the tree over his head, and he beheld a most thrilling and appalling sight.

Crouching along one of the projecting branches was a huge jaguar—the dreaded tiger of South America.

A pair of gleaming eyes like two balls of living flame glared down at Frank Reade from a great striped head, the monster body undulated lithely, and its tail moved slowly to and fro.

The spotted monster seemed about to leap upon the young inventor.

For a moment the realization of his frightful peril seemed to utterly paralyze Frank.

But such a state never lasted long with him. He thought rapidly and began to retreat toward the trap-door from which the spiral stairs led downward to the interior of the vehicle.

Mr. Reade beheld his son's danger, and an involuntary cry of alarm burst from his lips.

Barney and Pomp had no weapons with them. Their rifles were in the carriage and the campfire at which they stood when Pomp discovered the tiger was several yards from the vehicle.

The brave Irishman, and the black dead-shot darted toward the carriage, bent upon securing their weapons and assisting Frank, Jr.

But before the devoted fellows could reach the rear door of the carriage, and while the imperiled young inventor was slowly retreating with his eyes fixed upon the tiger, the animal leaped at him.

"Worra! Worra! It's kilt he is ontirely!" yelled Barney, as the tiger made his spring.

"Oh! Mars Frank!" screamed Pomp.

Frank was hurled upon his back against the metallic railing along the side of the carriage top.

The impetus of the leap carried the tiger partially over the same rail.

The animal hung there partially over the side of the flat roof, and strove to scramble up.

An instant's respite was granted Frank, Jr.

He was on his feet, while yet the tiger strove to gain a footing on the roof and reach him with his terrible claws.

Frank made one terrific forward leap.

The position of the tiger across the metallic guard-rail suddenly inspired him with a happy thought.

He reached the front of the roof, and quickly as the lightning's flash his hand grasped a small curved handle near the steering-lever.

Frank gave the little handle a powerful jerk.

Simultaneously with this movement, as though the handle controlled its movements, the tiger uttered a terrible roar, there was a convulsive jerk in every muscle of its huge frame, and it was hurled from the side of the carriage-top—away some feet distant.

Frank, Jr., had suddenly given the jaguar a terrible electric shock.

The small handle of which he had so suddenly bethought himself and pulled so promptly, had

turned on an electric current from the powerful battery, and sent it flashing along the iron rod to which the tiger clung.

Frank was saved.

But the cold sweat started upon his brow, and he felt a sudden weakness as the reaction consequent upon his intense excitement came upon him.

But now Pomp, who was first to reach the carriage, had entered it, and as the tiger picked himself up from the ground upon which the electric shock had hurled him, the black dead-shot leaped forth rifle in hand.

Instantly Pomp's rifle sprang to his shoulder, and he fired at the tiger, exclaiming:

"Take dat, you big yaller cat!"

Pomp's shot took effect.

The tiger was hit, and he staggered and fell clawing up the turf, and making the forest resound with his terrific roars.

Barney secured his rifle, and came out of the carriage close behind Pomp.

He did not mean that the darky should have all the honor of the tiger adventure to himself.

He thought he could easily dispatch the wounded beast.

So he ran toward him, clubbing his gun like his beloved shillalah, and shouting:

"I'll bate the head av him. It's mesel as 'll knock smitherens out av the ugly baste. Look out for me, ye thafe o' the world!"

"Hold on, Barney! Hold on!" cried Frank, Jr., knowing well that to rush at a wounded tiger like that was foolhardy.

But the wild Irishman was bent on outdoing Pomp, and he heeded not his young master's shout.

Barney reached the tiger and aimed a blow at his head, as he cried:

"Whoop! whoop! There, yez have it! Whoop!"

But the tiger was not as severely wounded as Barney supposed, and in an instant the now pain-maddened and thoroughly infuriated beast leaped upon him.

Barney went down, and the tiger with him, and a yell which resounded above the din of the tiger's roars was uttered by the poor fellow.

But Pomp saw Barney's peril, and although they were always quarreling between themselves, the darky was ready to fight for, ay, die for his old friend at that. The real friendship of the most devoted kind which existed mutually in their hearts came to the surface.

"Gib him your knife, Barney! Stick dat yaller cat in de ribs!" shouted Pomp, lustily.

And dropping his rifle, which he knew he could not discharge again for fear of hitting Barney Pomp whipped out his long-bladed hunting-knife and bounded to the rescue.

The succeeding moment there was a desperate fight in progress between the two men and the wounded tiger.

Frank and his father were utterly powerless to render the brave and reckless fellows assistance, much as they desired to do so.

As Pomp reached the tiger, in the struggle which was going on between the beast and Barney, the animal's great yellow belly was turned to the darkey.

Pomp uttered a delighted

"Yah! yah!"

Then suddenly ducking his head he shot forward like a human battering-ram, and his head struck the tiger with tremendous force.

The butting darkey knocked some of the wind out of the huge animal, and the next instant he was stabbing and slashing at him with his knife.

The weight of the beast held Barney pinned to the ground, but as the tiger turned his attention to his new adversary he released Barney, who regained his feet, covered with blood and clothing torn in shreds.

At that moment of desperate peril for Pomp, there came a ringing shout, and Corrajo came bounding forward out of an adjacent thicket.

"El tigre! El tigre!" shouted the gaucho.

He rushed straight at the terror of the Amazon country.

"Away! away!" he shouted to Barney.

The Irishman reeled back, and the gaucho made a leap at the tiger and struck him on the nose with his great knife just as he was about to deal the well-nigh-exhausted Pomp a terrible blow with his huge paws.

Corrajo had fought the tiger before that day, and as the animal reared upon his hind legs he aimed a blow straight at the tiger's heart.

Then with an agile bound he leaped backward, leaving his knife protruding from the side of the tiger.

But the blade had split the forest monarch's heart, and with one final roar, like a last trumpet note of a defeated, but defiant foe, the monster sank dying upon the sword.

CHAPTER VI.

A LITTLE TOO MUCH WHISKY AND A "BIT OF RUCTION."

NEITHER Barney or Pomp were as seriously wounded as might have been expected. Indeed it seemed they had miraculously escaped.

It was found that although both had received some deep scratches from the tiger's claws, no great resultant danger was to be apprehended.

Corrajo examined the wounds of both Barney and Pomp, and procuring some healing leaves he pounded them to a pumice and with them dressed the cuts and lacerations the brave fellows had received.

In slaying the tiger, the gaucho had made the two brave men his friends for life.

They didn't say much about gratitude, but they thought deeply.

"Arrah it's the illigant colored gintleman yez are," said Barney, grasping Pomp's hand.

"You're de boss Irisher. You takes de bakeshop, Barney," responded Pomp, and so in mutual admiration they buried the hatchet, at least for the time.

"Bedad, it was an illigant ruction intirely. I bate the head of the yaller thafe, so I did. But, Master Frank, will yez have the extrame nateness to hand me a wee sup av the rale old stuff? Be me soul it's a drop av ould Irish whisky that's the medicine we wants now, so it is," Barney went on.

Frank, Jr., produced a jug of Barney's favorite liquor from among the supplies.

Barney tasted it long and lovingly.

Then he handed the jug to Pomp, who also drank eagerly.

Meanwhile, the party gathered around the carriage, and partook of the lunch which had been prepared just before the tiger made his attack.

An animated conversation followed.

Dr. Vaneyke had made a copy of the cipher and the map on the ancient cube, which was supposed to reveal the secret of the lost treasures of the Peruvians.

The scientist had been intrusted with the mysterious cube since he visited the Reades at their home, and saw it for the first time.

After lunch the doctor exhibited his map and cipher.

"Our principal object being to discover the lost treasure, we must direct the course of our explorations toward the locality of the site marked on the ancient map by the arrow drawn in Brazil," said the doctor.

"Certainly, doctor," acquiesced Mr. Reade, Sr., and Frank.

"Now, Corrajo, what say you? Take a look at my copy of the ancient map, which is on a larger scale than that on the cube, and tell me if I am not right in thinking the point indicated by the first arrow is near the mouth of the Purus river?" said the doctor to the gaucho.

"Quite right, I think. I recollect hearing my father say that in former times the old Spanish name given on the ancient cube map to the river, near which the first arrow is drawn, was the same as that inscribed there."

"Then we can consider an important question settled?"

"That's a great point gained," said Mr. Reade, Sr.

"Yes," added Frank. "We have a definite landmark in the river to guide us now."

"That is true, but the journey to the Purus is through the wilds, where dangers lurk on every hand," said Corrajo, gravely.

"But can you guide us through the Amazon valley?" asked Frank.

"Yes, I can guide you from the Atlantic to the Pacific. From Parana on one coast to Lima on the other," answered Corrajo, proudly.

"Then we are sure to get along all right. Remember our Electric Horse gives us an advantage over all explorers who have attempted to penetrate the unknown region of the further Amazon," said Frank.

"Yes—yes. It is wonderful. We shall go where the foot of a white man never trod since the world began."

"That is glorious. It will be just like discovering a new world!" said Frank, Jr., with enthusiasm.

"But, doctor, have you made any progress in your efforts to solve the cipher?" asked Mr. Reade.

"No. That is to say, not in the actual reading of the enigma. But I think I have progressed far enough in my investigations to say with considerable certainty that I have discovered the meaning of three of the strange figures of the cipher, and that each of them stands for one Spanish word."

"Good!" exclaimed Frank, Jr.

"Excellent! What is the meaning of these

signs you have made out?" asked Mr. Reade, Sr.

"One is gold, the other two are respectively, sacred, and finger."

Mr. Reade, Sr., and Frank, Jr., had been so interested in their conversation with the doctor that they had not paid any attention to Barney and Pomp for some little time.

Frank, Jr., now looked around for Pomp and the Irishman, but he did not see them.

He did see the whisky jug though, and as a certain suspicion occurred to him he took up the jug and examined it.

The jug was empty, Barney and Pomp had drained it to the last drop.

"Well, here's a go!" cried Frank, laughing.

"What is it?" both asked.

"Barney and Pomp have emptied the whisky jug. There was enough in it to make them drunk a dozen times."

"I saw them going off just now," said Corrajo.

"Which way did they go?" asked Frank, Jr.

Corrajo pointed to the westward.

"What foolish drunken whim has taken possession of them I wonder?" said Mr. Reade.

Just as he spoke Barney's voice was heard from the woods to the westward beyond the open plain.

"Whoop! Ye murderin' varmint. Stand out av an Irish gintleman's way or be gorra it's atin' ye I'll be atther doin'!"

"Doan't you colored niggers fool roun' dis chile. You hear me warble. I've got a razor in me boot. Yas sah!" Pomp was heard to utter.

"Mercy!" exclaimed Mr. Reade, "they have encountered a band of Brazilian savages? Let's hasten to their assistance."

"All right! There's no knowing what mad freak they may be up to. Father, you remain and watch the Electric Horse, I don't like to leave it alone."

Mr. Reade assented.

Frank, Jr., accompanied by the doctor and Corrajo, started in the direction whence the shouts uttered by Barney and Pomp seemed to emanate.

"Perhaps you had better put on your suit of mail," suggested Dr. Vaneyke to Frank, Jr.

Corrajo smiled as he said rather enigmatically,

"The Guaribas are not armed."

"You do not seriously mean that the savages are without weapons?" asked Frank, Jr.

Corrajo shook his head, and the doctor laughed.

"I think you're chaffing," continued Frank, Jr.

They had almost reached the edge of the timber when the voices of Barney and Pomp, which they continued to hear, were nearly drowned by a chorus of unearthly screams.

"The Guaribas are very angry," said Corrajo.

He advanced into the tropical forest as he spoke, and Frank, Jr. and the doctor followed him closely.

The trees grew far apart and Frank and his companions beheld just ahead of them the most ludicrous scene they had ever witnessed.

They saw Barney and Pomp surrounded by a score of Guaribas—or man-apes of Brazil.

The huge monkeys, each as large as a boy of fourteen or fifteen, were dancing around Barney and Pomp, and chattering and screaming like mad.

Their comical, old-man faces were covered with malicious grins, and one of them had possession of Barney's hat, which he had stuck on the side of his head, thus making him look like a real man, and an Irishman at that.

At one glance their friends saw that Barney and Pomp were very hilarious, indeed, they were more than half seas over. The whisky had gone to their heads, and Barney was literally "three sheets in the wind and another a-fluttering," for he had thrown his coat off so it hung on him by one shoulder, just as though he had peeled for a regular Donnybrook row.

Barney brandished a club in lieu of a real shillalah.

Trailing his coat, he twirled his "twig av a stick" and danced and reeled about, while he whooped:

"Come on, yez murderin' spalpeens! Come on, yez nagurs. It's stale the hat av a gintleman yez will, eh? Bedad, I'll bate the heads av ye! whoop! Donnybrook for iver!"

Barney tried unsteadily to reach the big ape that wore his hat, but the great monkey leaped about, and so did the others, in such a lively manner that all the Irishman's furious blows dealt with his shillalah fell on empty air.

Pomp was too high to be mad and reckless just the same.

The way he cut at those big grinning,

chattering monkeys was a sight to see. But he couldn't hit them. They were never just there when Pomp had arrived.

Frank, Jr., laughed until his sides ached, the doctor roared and even Corrajo chuckled.

"Stan' up dah! stan' up like a man dah! you no count niggers!" cried Pomp ducking his head, and charging at the ape that wore Barney's hat.

But the ape dodged and Pomp's skull went "bang," plump against the trunk of a tree, and he keeled over.

Just at that moment our friends were startled by hearing the electric bell on the carriage ring out violently.

"Back to the Electric Horse! Barney! Pomp! quick! quick! father must be in trouble and he is all alone with the Electric Horse," cried Frank, Jr.

CHAPTER VII.

THE GIANT APES LEFT BEHIND—A BATTLE.

THE sound of the violently-ringing electric bell and Frank, Jr.'s shouts, from which they inferred that Mr. Reade, Sr., might be in danger, did more to sober up Barney and Pomp in a moment than anything else could possibly have accomplished.

Pomp picked himself up, shook his head, which seemed to have proven to be harder than the tree-trunk, and appeared all right again.

Barney drew on his coat, cast one fond, parting glance at the hat, which he considered lost for good, and both he and Pomp started to follow Frank, Jr., and the others, who were now rapidly retracing their way toward the open plain beyond the confines of the forest, where they had left the Electric Horse in charge of Mr. Reade, Sr.

As Barney and Pomp overtook Frank, the Irishman said by way of explanation:

"Bad luck to the hathens, we thought they was min whin we seed 'em creepin' along the edge av the woods, and we thought to have a bit av a shindy wid 'em widout disturbin' av you gintlemen."

"An' you done los' your hat! Golly if I meets dat big monkey agin wif yer hat on, deed I'se afeard I've done mistook him fer yerself, Barney, yah! yah!" said Pomp.

Frank and the others were too anxious for the safety of Mr. Reade, Sr., and the Electric Horse just then to pay much attention to Barney or Pomp.

The party soon emerged out of the woods upon the open pampas.

Then an exclamation of alarm burst from Frank, Jr.'s, lips at what he saw.

The Electric Horse was coming straight toward them at full speed. Mr. Reade, Sr., was at the engineer's post guiding and controlling the electric steed with one hand on the main-lever, while the other grasped the bell-lever which communicated the electricity to it and caused it to ring.

Rushing in pursuit of the Electric Horse and the strange vehicle which it drew were more than a score of nearly naked Amazon Indians.

The savages were tall, sinewy and swarthy fellows armed with native weapons, such as the long bow, the blow pipe, and, strangest of all, the famous bolas.

The natives rent the air with their fierce yells, and their great black eyes protruded with astonishment at the speed of the Electric Horse.

They had evidently not as yet made the discovery that the metallic steed was other than a gigantic living horse, and were consequently amazed at their inability to compete with it in point of speed.

"The wild men of the Amazon! The fiercest of all South American tribes!" shouted Corrajo, and his rifle sprang to his shoulder.

Just then the natives sent a shower of arrows from bow and blow-pipe after the Electric Horse.

At the same time the gaucho discharged his rifle with unerring and fatal aim.

One of the savages went down.

"Arrah! It's min sure this toime! Wild nagurs be gob, an' we struck a rale ruction this toime!" cried Barney.

Meantime, when he saw his son and companions approaching, Mr. Reade began to depress the main lever, and thus slow up.

The old gentleman was on deck, and as the speed of the wonderful horse decreased, his pursuers drew nearer.

Mr. Reade was in imminent danger from the weapons of the savages, but he only he turned the crank which controlled the electric machinery worked by the electric battery, by means of which the hinged sides of the vehicle were moved.

As if by magic, the mystic power from the battery lifted the sides of the carriage upward like great doors hinged at the top, until they stood on end, thus inclosing the roof of the carriage, and forming a complete bulwark and protection for the deck.

The next volley of arrows discharged by the savages struck the sheet-iron plates on the bulwarks, and glanced off harmlessly.

The natives paused in superstitious amazement as they witnessed the sudden and miraculous transformation of the appearance of the strange vehicle.

Taking advantage of the halt involuntarily made by the Indians, Frank, Jr., made a rush for the electric vehicle, which was now pretty near him.

He shouted encouragingly to his father, and discharged his rifle at the natives as he ran.

Frank was closely followed by the others, save the doctor, who had fallen behind. The old naturalist was not as fleet-footed as his younger comrades.

Neither Frank, Jr., nor the others noticed that the doctor was not keeping up to them until just as they reached the carriage, which was brought to a halt.

Then Corrajo glanced back for his old friend and master, to whom he was greatly attached.

At the same time Dr. Vaneyke uttered an alarmed cry. A second party of savages had just darted out of a clump of saput grass, and they were rushing between the doctor and his friends.

Corrajo turned, bent upon going to the rescue of his old friend, despite the terrible odds which he would be compelled to encounter.

But the original pursuers of the Electric Horse were now advancing again, and Frank, Jr. and Barney seized Corrajo and fairly dragged him up the rear steps and into the netting.

"We'll save the old doctor yet, friend Corrajo. But you shall not rush to certain destruction in attempting to do so," said Frank, Jr.

"He will be slain, murdered before my eyes!" cried Corrajo.

The whole party were now in the vehicle. The door was closed and the spring steps closed up with a snap.

"You run the rear brake, Barney. We may want to do some quick turning presently, for we are in for a hot fight!" cried Frank, Jr.

Then he bounded up the spiral stairs, through the trap-door in the roof, and gained the inclosed "deck."

Corrajo and Pomp followed him, but the former paused long enough to open his chest of weapons, and snatch up a singular weapon.

Barney grasped the brake-wheel over the rear axle, and he was ready to control the movements of the rear portion of the vehicle when a sharp turn was made.

"Father!" cried Frank as he gained the top of the vehicle. "We must run no further. At the very outset we must teach those murderous savages a lesson which they will remember, or we shall have no end of trouble. Then, too, the doctor must be rescued!"

"Yes! The doctor must be saved at any hazard. See, the natives have surrounded our poor old friend, and they are hurrying him away toward the forest in their midst."

"Thank heaven they have not at once slain him, and evidently seek to make him a prisoner," replied Frank, Jr.

"Now, father, turn the carriage sideways to the savages who first pursued you! Look out down there, Barney! We turn to the right!" shouted Frank, Jr.

Mr. Reade promptly depressed a small bar marked "S. A." for "side action" on the left side of the vehicle. That turned off the electric current from that side of the mechanical horse. Then he raised a lever-bar on the right side, which sent an increased amount of electricity to the wheels and springs, that controlled the movement on the corresponding side of the metal steed, and the natural result followed. The horse obeyed the immutable law of force and counterforce, and steed and vehicle promptly turned to the right, until the right side of the carriage was turned to the savages.

Then Mr. Reade, Sr., at a signal from Frank, threw up the grand central-lever, and the vehicle and horse was at rest for an instant.

Barney had worked the rear brake accurately, and the whole maneuver was accomplished with as much ease and speed as though the horse of metal was really endowed with life.

The savages, who had pursued the vehicle, were now close up to it. They threatened to clamber upon it, and their spears and arrows fell like hail-stones in a shower upon the carriage sides which protected the deck.

"There's no other way!" said Frank, "It's a question of life or death for the doctor. We

must get rid of these fellows, for the other party is enough for us to contend with!"

"What do you mean to do?" cried Mr. Reade, Sr., excitedly.

But Frank, Jr., did not hear his father. He was bounding down the spiral stairs into the interior of the vehicle.

At the same time Pomp was discharging his rifle at the Brazilian Indians, leveling the weapon over the bulwark of the deck.

Corrajo, too, was crouching there with his strange weapon in his hand.

It was the famous bolas of the Amazon Indians, and it consisted of a thong of braided and oiled rawhide, with a metal ball secured at each end—though sometimes round stones are used.

The gaucho was swinging the bolas in a peculiar way, somewhat after the manner in which the lasso is cast.

"Ha!" he muttered, "I want to single out the big chief of the band for my aim. Once he falls the others, left without a leader, will be apt to take to flight."

Suddenly Corrajo cast his bolas. The metallic balls whizzed through the air straight to the mark.

CHAPTER VIII.

TO THE RESCUE OF THE DOCTOR.

CORRAJO had at last succeeded in making a cast of the bolas at the chief of the Amazon savages whom his previously acquired knowledge of the tribe enabled him to distinguish from his followers by his peculiar head-dress.

The bolas-cord encircled the throat of the chief. One of the metal balls struck him under the ear, and the other whirled round and round his neck drawing the cord so tightly that it cut into the flesh, and strangled him as he fell from the force of the blow received from the ball on the other end of the string.

The singular weapon which, like the boomerang of Australia, is formidable only in the hands of one who has acquired the difficult art of throwing it properly, had accomplished its purpose.

But contrary to the expectations of Corrajo, the fall of their chief did not cause the savages to beat a retreat.

Probably scenting plunder, and thinking a continuance of the attack would result in victory they contrary to their usual custom, under similar circumstances, stood their ground.

Indeed, further infuriated by the fall of their chief, rallied and led by one who promptly assumed the leadership they made another charge.

Half a dozen of the yelling wild men succeeded in leaping up with surprising agility, and gained a hold upon the metal guard-rod which ran around the exterior of the vehicle on a level with the lower floor, and clinging there began to send their arrows at the steel-wire netting which, now that the sheet iron-plated sides were raised to protect the deck, alone interposed as a shield between them and Frank, Jr., and Barney, who were in the interior.

"Worra! Worra! The heathen blackguards 'll be after breakin' the net! Whoop! This is ille-gent. A ruction after me own heart! But it's the happy man I'd be if I could get at the nagurs wid me sthick!" roared Barney as from his post at the rear brake he banged away at the savages with his revolvers.

"They can't break the net, Barney," replied Frank, who was hurriedly engaged in making certain attachments to the electric battery by means of copper wires, which ran along the sides of the interior of the vehicle, insulated by means of incasing rubber tubes.

"What are yez up to, Masther Frank? Orah! worrah! orah! Bedad it's blowin' nadles out av sthicks the divils are doin'!" roared Barney.

The savages were using their blow-guns, and one of the little sharp arrows from one of those odd weapons had penetrated through the meshes of the steel net and struck Barney on the ear.

The Irishman danced about, holding on to his ear as though he was afraid he might lose it, and he poured out vials of his wrath upon the heads of the "hathen nagurs."

Barney's yells made those on deck think he must be seriously hurt, and Pomp called out:

"What's de matter, Barney?"

"Be gob the nagurs are pickin' holes in me ears so I kin wear ear-rings," replied the facetious Barney.

But all this had really occupied but a few moments, though some space had been devoted to the narration of the rapid succession of incidents.

Frank Reade, Jr., had only been absent from the carriage-deck for about a moment when he had the wits he had been adjusting all fixed.

"Now, then for a broadside!" cried Frank.

At that moment his father turned the electric current onto the metal guard to which the savages who were assailing the netting clung.

The natives received a shock that tumbled them off in all directions.

Then as they scrambled to their feet Frank, Jr., suddenly pulled a sliding-bar, which instantly sent a current of electricity along the copper wire he had just adjusted.

A crash of musketry occurred simultaneously with Frank's movement.

He had discharged the electric battery of six Winchester rifles all at once from the portholes in the side of the vehicle toward the savages, which cunningly constructed springs enabled him to unmask with the movement of the lever which turned on the electricity.

The broadside thus discharged was, so to say, the last straw that broke the camel's back, and the savages fled in consternation and confusion. Nor did they pause in their flight until they gained the shelter of the timber whence they had come.

"Hurrah! The broadside is a great success!" shouted Frank, in delight.

"Now, father, let the old horse out, and after the natives who are hurrying away with the doctor!" he added.

In a moment more the Electric Horse was in motion.

Forward he sped, majestically covering the ground with wonderful strides, just like a giant living horse going at full speed.

The carriage moved over the grass-grown pampas readily, and the wheels, owing to the broad tire, did not sink deeply, even where the ground was soft and yielding.

Corrajo and Pomp sent bullets from their rifles after the retreating savages.

On, on rushed the electric steed in pursuit of the natives who were carrying away the old doctor.

"Master Frank, make Pomp take a turn at the brake. Be dad is there any nade of a brakesman at all now?" said Barney.

"No, since we are going straight ahead."

"Then it's on deck I'll go. But do ye mind, the nagurs that has cotched the ould doctor seem like to git into the trees afore we kin catch up wid him," said Barney, pausing at the foot of the stairs.

"Yes, yes, but the Electric Horse is doing his best."

Barney bounded up the stairs, and Frank, through the netting, continued to watch the exciting chase.

It was as Barney said.

The savages who had made Doctor Vaneyke a captive were rapidly approaching a forest of large trees whose immense trunks would stop the Electric Horse.

Frank thought of the great saws he had brought with him which were contrived to work by means of electricity from the battery in the carriage.

"Our saws could demolish those trees, and open a path for the Electric Horse and carriage, but our progress would not be very fast, and so we cannot resort to the saws which may yet be of the greatest service to us, just now," reflected Frank.

He knew that the savages must be overtaken at once if the rescue of the doctor was to be accomplished.

Frank ascended to the deck, and with the others watched the savages who held his friend.

They were all excited, and it was a suspenseful time.

"We cannot overtake them before they reach the shelter of the trees. Cruel misfortune. The doctor is lost!" cried Corrajo, despairingly.

This fact was now evident to all.

It was no longer a question involving the slightest doubt, and Mr. Reade, Sr. said to Frank:

"It is as Corrajo says. Heaven protect our friend now!"

"Sure an' we kin shup the horse an' take to the woods on foot. It's an illigant ruction we kin have wid the nagurs hand till hand an' take the ould docthor away from the blaggards yet," said Barney.

"There may be a hundred more of the dusky wretches hidden in the timber," replied Mr. Reade, Sr.

"And there is enough of them in sight to form a deadly ambush for us in the woods," added Frank, Jr.

"Dat's so. Dem colored niggers am at home in the woods, too," vouchsafed Pomp.

"It's mesel as 'ul go afther thim all the same, bedad," said Barney.

"And I'll go with you!" said the devoted gaucho, bravely.

"But, Frank, the cipher!" suddenly exclaimed Mr. Reade, Sr.

"What of the cipher, father?"

"Heavens, Frank! Have you no thought of that? Why, the doctor has the ancient cube, and all his copies and the map in his pocket!"

Frank turned pale.

Without the cipher he knew they could never find the lost treasure.

CHAPTER IX.

MEN IN MAIL—FRANK, JR.'S, TORPEDOES—CHASING A CONDO.

"NEVER say die" is the motto for us now, father. We will not think the secret of the ancient treasure is lost to us yet, for do we not mean to rescue the doctor?" said Frank, Jr.

"But I fear the worst!" replied Mr. Reade, Sr.

"There they go, the bloody hathens!" cried Barney.

The natives were even then entering the dense forest of the Amazon, and as Barney spoke they disappeared. But as the Indians vanished into the timber their friends of the captive caught sight of him.

The doctor waved his hand toward those whom he feared he was parting with forever, as he passed from view.

"We cannot enter the great forest, and the electric saws will not open a way for us with sufficient rapidity," Mr. Reade, Sr., said.

Corrajo shouted with all his might:

"Keep a stout heart, doctor! I will save you yet!"

"We shall have to follow the natives on foot, and now the suits of mail we brought with us will be of service," said Frank, Jr.

"The very thing. Those mail suits are bullet-proof, and they will insure us protection against the spears, arrows and other weapons of the savages," assented Mr. Reade, Sr.

"Yes, the mail suit will render us well-nigh invulnerable. But, father, you won't think of venturing into the forest?"

"And why not?"

"Ah, sir," cried Corrajo, "I ask it as a favor that you will loan me your suit of mail. I understand the customs of the savages, and while you and the others remain to guard your remarkable invention, your son and I will pursue the savages."

"Well, well, I suppose I may as well consent. Yes, you can have the suit of mail. You will make better use of it than I could hope to," assented Frank's father.

So it was decided.

Frank and Corrajo descended into the interior of the carriage, and donned each a suit of chain armor of the finest steel, flexible in every part, and provided with helmets which protected the entire head and face, and was provided with openings through which they could see and breathe.

When thus incased in their armor, which in no way impeded the freedom of their movements, Frank and Corrajo resembled the mail-clad knights of the mediæval days.

Before securing his armor finally upon his person, Frank took the precaution to put a small compass in his pocket, so that if by any unfortunate chance he and the gaucho should become separated in the Brazilian wilderness he would not be entirely without the means of directing his course.

When all was in readiness, Frank, Jr., and Corrajo stepped out of the carriage, which had been brought to a stand still near the confines of the timber, and started in pursuit of the doctor, carrying with them arms and ammunition, as well as a certain supply of objects packed in a tin box, which was suspended from a belt Frank wore outside of his armor.

Mr. Reade and the others bade the rescuers God speed, and in a moment they were lost to sight among the trees, while, at being left behind, Barney grumbled:

"Bedad, it's a foin chance that I'm loosin' for a bit av a shindy. Worra! I thought I might yit run across the thafe that stole me illigant chappo in the woods. Bad cess to the dirty blackguard!"

Frank, Jr., and Corrajo advanced swiftly.

Under the great palms, cow-trees and the like, covered with sapos, or hanging vines, amid clumps of wild bananas and mandioc they threaded their way.

The rover of the pampas now proved his skill as a trailer. The Indians had struck into the woods immediately after passing out of sight. There was no trace by which to track them visible to Frank, but Corrajo was not at fault.

The gaucho trailed the captors of his aged master with all the surprising skill of one of our North American Indians.

Meanwhile, he said:

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Frank, Jr., and Corrajo advanced swiftly.

"We must be on the alert for an ambush. The cunning Amazon savages always seek to take an enemy by surprise."

Constantly on the alert, they hastened on and on until, perhaps, they had penetrated a mile into the depths of the wood.

Then, suddenly, without the slightest warning of their presence, the Amazon savages suddenly sprang up all about them from the shelter of a jungle, whose confines our adventurers had just reached.

Frank's rifle was instantly discharged, and the foremost of the savages—a howling, hideous creature—fell, while Corrajo's bullet promptly dropped another.

Then the two men in armor charged forward side by side. They had slung their rifles across their shoulders by the straps with which they were provided, and now each grasped a pair of revolvers, and as they advanced straight through the wild horde they discharged a simultaneous volley of pistol shots.

The savages went down as though swept away by a cyclone. Fire flashed in a deadly stream from the muzzles of the fatal tubes, and the air was heavy with powder smoke.

But the natives outnumbered our hero and Corrajo ten to one, and they sent a shower of arrows and spears at them.

The armor turned the points of these weapons, and they fell beside the men in mail.

They passed the thicket in their desperate charge, and beheld the doctor in the grasp of two powerful savages.

At the sight of his master, Corrajo uttered a cry of joy, and with one bound he reached his side. A blow of his mailed hand stretched one of the doctor's guards at his feet, and coming up quickly, Frank, Jr., felled the other.

"Thank Heaven you have come in time!" cried the old doctor fervently, while he trembled from head to foot with emotion.

"Now then, to fight our way back!" cried Frank, Jr.

"Can you do that?" asked the doctor.

Frank's answer was drowned by a frightful pandemonium of yells, and the savages charged upon the adventurers furiously.

They placed the doctor behind them and started forward.

The charge of the savages was met by a fusillade from the revolvers of the adventurers who had now reloaded their weapons.

For a moment the Indians were compelled to fall back, but our friends had not advanced far when a large reinforcement came up.

The savages were more or less awed, and intimidated at the failure of their weapons to injure the mail-clad men, and yet they were so infuriated that they did not allow their superstitious fears to drive them from the conflict.

Backed by the reinforcements they had received, the Indians formed in a phalanx, and as Corrajo saw the savage legion thus massing themselves, he said to Frank:

"We shall surely be overpowered by the force of numbers now. We can never fight our way through their compact lines!"

"Ah, my brave friends. You had better have left me to my fate. You have sacrificed yourselves upon the altar of friendship," said the old doctor, despairingly.

"It is true enough, doctor, that ordinary weapons cannot avail us now, but I mean to try the virtue of those percussion-torpedoes you saw me experimenting with in my laboratory at home some months ago. I have perfected them. They are something of a novelty in the way of self-discharging high-explosives, doctor," answered the young inventor, with a calmness that went far to reassure his two comrades.

Then Frank opened the tin case at his belt, and it proved to be filled with metal cones. The receptacle contained at least a dozen of the small unique projectiles of destruction.

No time was to be lost. A crisis was at hand, and without another word Frank hurled one of the cones among the savages. It exploded as it struck among them, and a shower of bullets contained within it, outside of a central chamber, which was filled with nitro-glycerine were discharged. The result was more destructive than the explosion of a cannon loaded with grape-shot.

In rapid succession Frank threw three more of his torpedoes and then the terror stricken savages of the Amazon broke and fled in the wildest confusion. The way of retreat was opened and our adventurers took advantage of it. They quickly gained the pampas beyond the timber. There they beheld pairs of huge condors—the mammoth South American bird of prey—circling above the bodies of a couple of natives who had been slain by the shots discharged from the carriage.

Barney and Mr. Reade greeted their ap-

pearance upon the pampas with a joyful shout. But our friends were yet in danger. The savages had rallied and now emerged from the wood in pursuit of them.

Frank felt for another torpedo. Then he discovered that the box was gone. It had become detached from his belt as he ran and fallen, but a thick layer of cork-shavings in which each torpedo was separately packed had prevented an explosion.

"We must run for it. Only our speed can save us now!" cried Frank.

They darted toward the Electric Horse, which was put in motion and came toward them. To facilitate his movements, the doctor threw aside his coat, forgetting in the excitement of the moment that it contained the cipher-cube and all his copies and maps.

The three friends reached the carriage and bounded into it. As they did so they glanced back and saw one of the great condors, which they had observed, swoop down, and, seizing the doctor's coat in its claws, fly away with it.

"Misfortune of misfortunes!" cried the doctor. "I forgot myself. The ancient cipher and all that pertains to it is in my coat!"

"Then we must chase the condor. Turn on all the electricity father, and follow the great bird!" shouted Frank, Jr.

The next moment the Electric Horse was dashing away in pursuit of the condor, which flew along the pampas skirting the wood.

The sides of the deck were lowered, and Corrajo and Pomp seized their rifles, and dropping each on one knee, leveled their weapons, and breathlessly waited to get a shot at the condor if the speed of the vehicle brought it in range. Everything depended on the issue.

CHAPTER X.

A RACE WITH A CONDOR—TOO MUCH SPEED ALL AT ONCE.

THE flight of the vulture king of the Cordilleras was somewhat impeded by the weight of the doctor's coat. But the daring thief soared steadily onward, though he did not attain the lofty altitude of the upper regions of the air, where he is at home.

The condor usually dwells in the region of the Cordilleras, whose lofty peaks are perpetually whitened with snow, but occasionally the great birds are encountered in the Amazon valley.

Perhaps no other member of the feathered tribe, unless it be the eagle, habitually soars as high above the surface of the earth as this monarch of the vulture species.

Humboldt, the great traveler, states that he has seen the condor in the sky more than a thousand feet above Chimborazo, which attains an elevation of 21,420 feet above the level of the sea.

In seeking food the condor depends almost entirely on the keenness of his vision. From his station amid the clouds, even above the sight of the Cordillerian hunter, he notes his prey and at once descends. His sense of smell is not acute. A piece of raw meat placed very near him, but out of sight, he will not discover by its scent.

No doubt the condor, which was flying away with Doctor Vaneyke's coat, containing the ancient cipher, presumed he had pounced upon something very desirable in the way of food.

But there was great danger that the huge bird might fly away over the dense Brazilian forest, in which event rapid pursuit of him would be impossible.

While the condor continued its flight it occasionally uttered a peculiar cry not unlike the hissing voice of the goose.

"I think the great vulture is calling to his mate," said Corrajo, who with Pomp continued to kneel on the deck of the carriage with their rifles in readiness to try a shot at the condor.

Mr. Reade, Sr., still occupied the engineer's post.

"Can you not crowd on a little more electricity, father?" asked Frank, Jr.

"No, I've turned on the full power of the battery. It is impossible to produce more motive power now."

"But the old horse would stand it and it would not be dangerous to go faster on this level pampas."

"That's true enough, Frank."

"Then we'll increase our speed a bit."

"What do you mean to do?"

"You have forgotten that we carry a double battery—that under the one from which we are drawing the electricity now a second battery is concealed."

"That's a fact, Frank, my memory isn't quite what it was at your age, I'll confess."

"Well now, father, suppose we attach the wires and connect the second battery with the machinery?"

"All right, but we must turn the current

gradually so as not to rack or strain the machinery suddenly."

"That's so, for if the machinery should get out of order now and compel us to stop here, we might as well say good-bye to the lost treasure."

"And I could never forgive myself for my carelessness in throwing away my coat," said Dr. Vaneyke.

"Begob an' its flyin' we are now sure," remarked Barney.

His words were not very extravagant for the Electric Horse, under the impetus of the entire electric battery, ordinarily in use, was speeding over the level pampas at the rate of a fast railway train.

"Well, father, I'll go down and connect the concealed battery," said Frank.

"Very well, but don't neglect to set back the governing lever, and slowly apply the new power."

"I'll not neglect that, father," replied Frank, Jr.

Then he descended into the interior of the vehicle.

"What was your idea in concealing the second battery?" asked the doctor of Mr. Reade, Sr.

"Well, you see, doctor, that was Frank's idea. During several of his exploring expeditions it has been his experience to encounter savages or other evilly disposed persons who have sought to damage his inventions so as to capture him."

"Ah, I understand, and this time Frank means to forestall such attempts."

"As far as possible. You comprehend that should an enemy destroy the upper battery we could still proceed as fast as we desired, unless we wanted to have another condor race."

"Yes. It is an admirable thought. You would only have to make the attachments necessary to apply the motive power of the concealed battery to the machinery."

"Exactly, doctor. And there is little fear that one ignorant of its existence and location would even suspect, much less discover, the second battery."

"It's the great janus is Master Frank," said Barney, enthusiastically.

"But see, de big bird am gwine for de woods suah now," cried Pomp.

"Yes, the condor has changed his course!" Corrajo at that moment exclaimed.

Such was the alarming fact, and the huge bird was moreover descending earthward.

"Faith an' I hear a strange sound a bit ahead in the woods. Bedad, it's like thunder away off," said Barney.

All the party were cognizant of the sound alluded to, and Mr. Reade, Sr., said to Corrajo:

"What is it? To me the sound seems like that occasioned by the rush of waters."

"We are approaching the Amazon. We hear the distant sounds of the mighty river," replied the gaucho.

"Make haste, Frank!" called out Mr. Reade, Sr., a moment subsequently.

As the condor had some distance yet to traverse before he began to fly over the forest, additional speed might bring him within range yet before he arrived at the confines of the timber.

Frank, Jr., was meantime working swiftly.

He opened the concealed door in the floor which communicated with the second battery, and quickly made the needful attachments by means of which the power of the heretofore unused battery was now to be utilized.

First, Frank, Jr., set the controlling lever back so that only about a third of the full current of electricity could pass to the machinery which moved the horse.

This main lever of the second battery, worked on a crescent-shaped iron-guard which was supplied with flanges at intervals of three inches to catch the lever which could thus be secured at any point and so means are precisely the power of the electricity turned on.

The moment the one-third power applied at first by Frank, Jr., was communicated to the Electric Horse his speed was correspondingly increased.

"Whoop! It's gainin' on the feathered thief o' the worruld we are now!" shouted Barney, exultantly, as the speed of the vehicle was accelerated.

There was a possibility that the condor might decrease his speed yet while the pursuers advanced more rapidly.

Their spirits rose and Pomp remarked hopefully:

"We'se gwine fo' to git a shot at de big bird yet, I reckons."

"Yis. Be gorra—"

What Barney had started to remark was abruptly interrupted.

The Electric Horse suddenly shot forward like

an arrow discharged from a bow, and the carriage gave a tremendous lurch forward.

Barney was leaning upon the side rail near Pomp, and the sudden impetus carried the darky against the Irishman with great force, and he was hurled to the ground. Pomp could not recover his balance in time to save himself, and he followed Barney. But Pomp struck on his head, and so he wasn't much hurt.

Barney had all the breath knocked out of him, but he scrambled up in time to see the Electric Horse brought to a halt at some distance ahead.

Mr. Reade clung to the main lever when the horse so suddenly darted forward, and thus sustained himself from falling.

Corrajo and Dr. Vaneyke were precipitated upon the floor of the carriage deck, but they were fortunate enough to escape a fall to the ground.

The cause of the sudden acceleration of speed may readily be surmised.

The lever controlling the electric supply from the second battery had slipped out of the flange in which Frank, Jr. had hurriedly thrown it, and the entire electric current from the concealed battery was, all at once, sent to the machinery moving the metal horse.

Frank hastened to bring the lever back to the "one third" flange, whence it had escaped as soon as possible, and then Mr. Reade, witnessing the fall of Barney and Pomp, shouted:

"Turn off all the electricity down there, Frank!"

Frank at once obeyed.

Mr. Reade also threw back the upper lever, and thus as soon as possible the carriage was stopped.

Frank glanced back at Barney and Pomp, and an impatient exclamation fell from his lips, as he saw Barney throw off his coat and square himself for a fight, while Pomp began to get ready to butt.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CONDOR FALLS IN THE FOREST—WILD BOARS AND NATIVES.

JUST then Corrajo, who had quickly regained his feet, and helped the doctor up, cried:

"Fortune favors us! See, the condor is swooping downward. He means to alight, I think."

"He has my eternal gratitude if he only drops my coat," said the doctor.

"Yes, there he goes. Good! Excellent! He has settled down on the pampas!" exclaimed Mr. Reade, Sr., the succeeding moment.

The party on the deck were for the present so intent upon observing the movements of the condor, that they did not think of looking back for Barney and Pomp.

Frank, Jr., was really the only one who had observed the belligerent attitude of the Irishman and the darky.

He thought they might get into a fight, and really injure each other, so he opened the door in the rear of the vehicle, descended the spring-steps, which unfolded as the door opened, and ran toward Barney and the darky.

Meanwhile the moment the Irishman was on his feet he cried:

"Bad luck to yez, ye nagur! Yez threw me off av the carriage! Be dad, I'll have a whack at yer black mug, so I will. It's manners I'll be ather tachin' av yez!"

Then it was Barney threw off his coat, and put up his hands.

"Go 'way, man, I done nuffin. Doan' yer look cross-eyed at dis coon. Yah hears me whisper."

"Yer a loier, so yez are; I'll bate the head av yez!"

"Who flung dis chile off? He flung hisself. Oh, yes, dat's likely, dat am. You'se a fool. De kerrige done gib a jump. Dat's what done it."

"Begorra, maybe yer roight."

"Dat's wat's de matter."

"Come, come, you two hurry up or you'll be left behind!" shouted Frank, Jr., who was now near enough to make himself heard.

Barney put on his coat, and then he and Pomp ran back, joined Frank, Jr. and all three returned to the carriage.

As they went along Frank, Jr., explained the cause of the accident, and Barney acknowledged he was in the wrong.

Reaching the horse they boarded the carriage and an advance was made again.

The condor, after alighting, had remained at rest until just as the carriage started, and then it soared away toward the forest, yet carrying the doctor's coat in its claws.

In a few moments Frank, Jr., gradually turned on the power of the second battery again until the Electric Horse sped along at a speed that almost took the breath of the explorers away.

They were all willing to risk the danger of this

wonderful speed in order to recover the clew to the lost treasure of the Peruvians.

Corrajo and Pomp, with rifle still in readiness, kept their eyes fixed on the great bird.

The surprising speed now attained by the Electric Horse enabled him to gain on the feathered traveler of the sky. The rifles in the hands of the gaúcho and the darkey were both provided with telescopic sights. Thus their aim was rendered accurate at a great distance.

Suddenly Corrajo said:

"I think we are in range."

The others were breathless for a moment, and both Corrajo and Pomp were seen preparing for the shot upon which so much depended.

All at once there came a double report. The two weapons were discharged at almost the same instant. And what of the condor? Was he hit?

For an instant this most important question remained in uncertainty and doubt. Then suddenly a shout went up from our friends. The condor, which hung over the edge of the woods, was seen to flutter as though about to fall, but he winged his way wearily onward for some distance.

"He is surely hit!" cried the doctor.

As though in confirmation of this, the condor soon fluttered earthward, and finally fell among the tree-tops of the forest.

"Bedad it's a dead condor we'll find in the woods!" cried Barney.

Corrajo expressed the same opinion.

Frank, Jr., and the gaúcho had not as yet removed their suits of mail, and the former said: "You and I will go in quest of the condor, if you like, Corrajo."

"All right. I would prefer you for my companion. You are very brave, and we may find dangers that are hidden from our sight in yonder forest," answered the gaúcho.

He and the young inventor made certain preparations and then started for the forest.

Barney and Pomp again urged their desires to accompany Frank, Jr., and Corrajo, but in vain, and Barney said:

"Bedad it's brakin' on a strate-car I moight as well be doin', for all the ructions and shindys be the way of divarsion that's comin' my way at all."

Corrajo took another singular weapon out of his chest this time before starting.

It was a long slender tube, from which dangled a vicuña-skin quiver, filled with arrows not more than ten inches in length.

"What's that?" asked Frank, Jr., indicating the weapon.

"That is a 'gravatana,' or to give it the English name—a blow-gun," answered Corrajo.

The blow-gun in many portions of South America supplies the place of firearms. The specimen carried by Corrajo was about ten feet long, and very light. It was composed of stems of a variety of palm, which so considerably vary in size that one may be pushed inside the other. The Amazon Indians are adepts in the manufacture of this weapon, and they use it with remarkable skill. Having fitted the stems together the blow-gun maker removes the pith, and spirally binds the whole with supple bark. A conical wooden mouth-piece is inserted. Sights are fitted on the barrel, and armed with arrows needle-pointed the huntsman is ready. He carries also an indispensable piece of bone which is used to sharpen the arrows. Sometimes when on the warpath, the native dips his arrows in the deadly wourali poison. Then death is the certain result of a wound received from one of them.

Night was almost at hand when Frank, Jr., and the gaúcho found themselves again threading the forest of the Amazon.

Soon the full moon came over the tree tops and flooded the forest with soft, silvery light.

Frank, Jr., and Corrajo sought to follow the course taken by the condor before it finally fell, for they deemed it possible that the great vulture might have dropped the prize which they sought to recover before it at last dropped amid the trees.

"Hark!" all at once admonished Corrajo, whose hearing was marvelously acute.

Frank listened, and above the mysterious sounds of the forest, which are ever to be heard, he distinguished an utterance which was new to him.

"It sounds like the grunting of a large drove of hogs," he said.

"And so it is. The wild hogs of the Amazon, or, as we of this country call them, peccaries, are coming. Listen! You hear the clashing sound as if bones were brought in rapid contact."

"Yes," assented Frank, Jr.

"That sound is made by the clashing together of the wild boars' tusks. We must make haste,

and get out of their way. They are very dangerous."

Corrajo started forward swiftly and Frank accelerated his pace to keep up with him. But the wild boars gained on them, and the gaúcho shouted:

"We must climb trees!"

They ran to a tall tree, which was hung with clinging sapot vines and swung themselves up into its branches.

The wild hogs came in sight as our friends gained the limbs of the tree. The animals were tracking them, it seemed.

But as they came up the two adventurers heard shouts from the rear of the swinish drove, and a dozen Indian hunters, armed with spears and bows came in sight.

They sent a shower of arrows among the wild hogs, and leaving two of their number on the ground the drove fled.

Corrajo and the young inventor remained motionless in the tree concealed by the boughs and hoped they would escape discovery.

CHAPTER XII.

THE CIPHER-CUBE RECOGNIZED BY A NATIVE—A FLOATING ISLAND.

THE leafy canopy of the tree in which Frank, Jr., and the gaúcho had taken refuge served to entirely conceal them. The native hunters had not seen them previously, and now they were not discovered.

The savages quickly dressed the wild hogs they had killed, and laden with them they took their departure.

When the last one of the natives passed out of sight among the trees, Frank, Jr., and Corrajo descended from their hiding-place.

Immediately they resumed their way.

Frank, Jr., found his pocket compass of service now. He had taken an observation with it before entering the woods, and now the unerring needle enabled him and his comrade to quite accurately follow the course of the condor.

But all at once, about five minutes after they descended the tree, Corrajo suddenly drew Frank behind the trunk of a great tree, and the young inventor then saw a native warrior peering at him and the gaúcho from out a tangled forest growth.

"The native has discovered us, and if he is permitted to return to the hunters to whose party he belongs we shall soon have the entire band after us," whispered Corrajo.

"There he goes now to tell his band of his discovery," replied Frank, and he raised his rifle as he saw the savage stealing away in the direction taken by the native hunters.

But Corrajo grasped the young inventor's weapon, saying hastily:

"No, no! You must not fire! The report would betray us."

"That's a fact. You think of everything. But what's to be done?"

"My blow-gun is silent."

"Ah, you mean to use it now?"

"Yes. You remain here until I return. The native is evidently not aware that we have discovered him. I will trail him down."

"All right," acquiesced Frank.

Corrajo glided away, and almost at once disappeared.

Some moments elapsed, during which Frank listened eagerly for a sound. None came. Ten moments passed. Still Corrajo did not return. Frank became somewhat anxious, but he remained where he was. For half an hour Frank did not move, but by that time his anxiety, because of Corrajo's delay, developed into positive alarm for the gaúcho's safety.

Frank determined to advance in the direction of the wounded condor's flight.

He emerged from his hiding-place and felt for the pocket compass with which to guide his course.

Then all at once the recollection came to his mind that just before they discovered the savage he had given the compass to the gaúcho.

Though the loss of the compass at this time disconcerted Frank not a little, there was too much at stake to allow him to for a moment think of abandoning the attempt to follow up the condor.

Frank pressed on, in what he thought to be the course taken by the giant bird.

Presently he emerged into an open space, but he suddenly drew back again, for he beheld an old white-haired Amazon savage in the center of the open. The aged native was examining some object on the ground, which at a second glance he recognized with a surprised start.

The object on the ground at the feet of the old Indian, was Dr. Vaneyke's coat.

And even as Frank made this discovery, the old savage drew the ancient cipher-cube from the pocket of the garment.

For a moment Frank saw the old fellow stare at the cube with protruding eyes, and then an unmistakable look of recognition came upon his swarthy face.

Frank said to himself:

"This is a startling occurrence. I am certain the old Indian has seen the cipher-cube before to-night."

There could be no doubt of this, for while an expression of awe and reverence supplemented his startled look of recognition, the savage placed the cipher-cube reverently upon the ground and prostrated himself before it, as though he was worshipping an idol.

"What mystery of this strange land does all this portend?" wondered Frank.

But he did not stop to indulge in vague conjectures just then.

The aged Amazon native picked up the cipher-cube, and hugging it to his breast, as though he regarded it as a great treasure, he started off with it.

Frank stole after him.

The young man meant to surprise the native, and secure the cube. He clubbed his rifle and was ready to deal a sudden blow when near enough.

Frank, unheard, had almost reached the savage, and he was in the very act of dealing him a blow from behind with his clubbed weapon, when a dry twig broke under the pressure of his foot with a sharp snap.

The Indian wheeled about and saw Frank, but his discovery came too late to save him. As he turned the rifle descended and the savage went down under the blow.

Frank sprang forward, and possessed himself of the cube. Then he darted away in the direction in which he had come. He paused in his flight long enough to secure the map and drawings relating to the cipher from the doctor's coat, but he did not burden himself with the garment.

Frank had put some distance between himself and the old Indian when he heard a loud and savage yell from the rear which informed him that the native had recovered, and was sounding an alarm.

He presumed that soon the old Indian would call together his comrades, and that they would institute an immediate pursuit.

Directing his course toward the pampas, which he thought could not be far distant, Frank ran at the top of his speed.

But on and on he continued, and yet he did not emerge from the great forest. Soon the sound of rushing water came to his ears, and presently he came out upon the bank of the mighty Amazon. Then he knew that he had fled in the wrong direction—that he was lost in the great South American wilderness.

Frank was immeasurably dismayed. For a moment he stood there on the bank of the largest river in the world, which passes from the Andes across the entire continent to the Pacific Ocean. And as Frank Reade, Jr., stood there, where perhaps the foot of no other white man had ever pressed the soil of mother earth, he all at once became conscious that the water was steadily creeping upward about his feet. Then he knew that this must be due to the influence of the ocean tide, and he remembered having read, as is the fact, that the Atlantic tide, notwithstanding the weight of the river, makes its influence felt at a distance of five hundred miles from the coast. Professor Agassiz has confirmed this report.

But the young inventor was in no mood to indulge in scientific or geographical reflections. What he wanted was to find his way to the Electric Horse.

"I'll have to send up a fire signal. If father or any of them see it they will surely ring the electric-bell, and its sound will guide me," thought Frank.

He had with him some peculiar sky-rockets of his own manufacture, not unlike very large Roman candles, and he quickly set off one of them.

Ball after ball of red fire shot upward into the sky.

Then to Frank's inexpressible delight he heard the ringing of the electric-bell, and he knew his signals had been seen by his friends.

Frank started in the direction whence came the sound of the bell.

He ran but a short distance when he suddenly halted again. He saw a dark form running toward him. An instant and he recognized Corrajo. Then he saw the gaúcho was pursued by a large band of natives headed by the old savage who had recognized the cipher-cube.

In an instant Corrajo came up.

The pursuers were so close at hand that there was no time for explanations then, and he and Frank retreated. Arrows struck them repeatedly, and only their suits of mail saved them. Finally they made a stand, and held the enemy

in check until they exhausted their supply of ammunition. This time in his haste, Frank, Jr., had neglected to bring any of his percussion torpedoes with him. Soon he and Corrajo were forced back to the river. Corrajo suddenly discerned an island, and he told Frank they must swim to it. They plunged into the water and reached the island. A moment later they discovered it was in motion. "We are on one of the wonderful floating islands of the Amazon," cried Corrajo.

CHAPTER XIII.

OUT OF DANGER—A NIGHT JOURNEY.

The island which Frank, Jr., and Corrajo had reached certainly was in motion. The current of the Amazon carried it along steadily, the trees growing from its surface serving as masts. The great river is celebrated for its moving islands, which some have supposed to have become detached from its banks during the rainy season by the process of undermining which then takes place owing to the vast volume of water confined in its channel.

It is during the season of almost continuous rain in the fall that certain portions of the great valley is periodically inundated.

The flood season is greatly dreaded by the natives, as the river sometimes rises so suddenly that the lowlands are flooded before the inhabitants can make their escape.

While the floating island moved onward the savages ran along the river-bank yelling wildly and discharging their arrows.

But their shafts fell short, and the safety of the young inventor and his comrade was insured, at least for a time.

The ringing of the electric bell was still heard, and Frank suddenly exclaimed:

"The island is carrying us toward the Electric Horse!"

The sound of the bell, as it grew more and more distinct, assured Frank of this.

"It is so," replied Corrajo. "The river makes a bend here, and its course is toward the Atlantic whence we came."

"And we are drifting inshore!" said Frank in alarm.

"Yes, an eddy is carrying us to the bank."

"Then we shall be overwhelmed by the savages!"

The sound of the bell became more distinct than ever as the island was carried steadily toward the southern bank in the bend of the stream.

"Look!" cried Frank, Jr., excitedly. "I see the moonlight reveals the open pampas beyond a fringe of trees on the bank!"

"Yes, yes," assented the gaucho. "We are fortunate, for the river has carried us out of the forest!"

"I'll send up another fire-ball!" cried Frank, Jr., and drawing one of his great Roman candles from a water-tight metal case at his girdle he set it off.

The savages in anticipation of the island's reaching the river bank had now assembled at the bend of the river, and they were ready for an attack.

But a few moments succeeding the discharge of Frank, Jr.'s last fire-balls a shout was heard inland.

"Whoop! Give the hathen nagurs fits, Pomp! Bedad, it's a ruction the blackguards wants, an' we're the boys to give 'em an iligant shindy!" Barney yelled.

"Hi! Yi! Hello dar, Marse Frank! We're comin'. De big boss an' right behind us too, comin' like he's walkin' fo' dat cake!" roared Pomp.

"The brave fellows have left the Electric Horse, and they are rushing into danger on our account," said Frank.

"They cannot know of the presence of the multitude of natives whom the trees conceal from their sight," said Corrajo.

"They are utterly reckless of danger."

"The savages will draw them into a deadly ambush."

"I fear so, and I will shout to them and warn them to go back."

"Yes. Do so," assented Corrajo.

Frank was about to shout a warning to Barney and Pomp when a loud explosion sounded in the rear of the trees behind the Indians, and in the direction whence Barney and Pomp were approaching.

"Good luck! Our friends are hurling some of my deadly torpedoes among the savages!" cried Frank.

It was so, and report after report sounded as the explosives were hurled into the trees among the Indians on the river bank.

They could not stand the destructive discharges, and as the island reached the bank they broke and fled.

Frank, Jr., and Corrajo leaped ashore, and darted through the trees out upon the pampas.

There they beheld Barney and Pomp, who had now exhausted their supply of torpedoes, and swiftly approaching came the Electric Horse with Mr. Reade, Sr., and Dr. Vaneyke on "deck."

How grand the magnificent metal steed and the wonderful structure it drew looked by night. The brilliant electric light flashed from the eyes of the colossal horse, and a stream of the same dazzling light radiated from the great globe on top of the carriage in front of the engineer's post, where stood Mr. Reade, Sr., with the doctor beside him. It was a most surprising and astonishing sight, and Frank Jr.'s heart thrilled with pride and joy as it was revealed to him.

But the retreat of our friends from the island, now that the discharge of the torpedoes had ceased, caused the savages to rally, and as Frank and Corrajo, accompanied by Barney and the darky, ran toward the Electric Horse, the enemy burst through the trees in pursuit of them.

"Down! Down! Flat upon the ground with you all!" shouted Mr. Reade, Sr., at the top of his voice.

The doctor was seen to rush down the stairs and seize the brake over the rear axles.

Comprehending what was about to occur, our adventurers all threw themselves flat on the pampas, and immediately, in obedience to the power of its wonderful mechanism, directed by Mr. Reade, the Electric Horse turned and brought the broadside toward the onrushing Indians.

Then followed a discharge of the electric battery of Winchester rifles worked by the doctor under Mr. Reade, Sr.'s instructions.

A number of savages fell, the balls passing over our prostrate friends and striking in the midst of their enemies.

The natives halted, and regarded the Electric Horse with the greatest wonder and alarm. A score of voices uttered the same strange words as they fled, as though they were pursued by all the evil spirits of the Amazons.

"Ah, they say it is a spirit horse!" cried Corrajo, who knew something of the native tongue, as he and his comrades arose and quickly gained the carriage.

As may be supposed, they were warmly welcomed, and when Frank placed the cipher-cube in the hands of the old naturalist, together with the maps and copies he had made, the satisfaction of the good doctor found vent in a joyful shout, in which Barney and Pomp joined, while the one executed a few steps of an Irish jig and the latter shuffled a regular plantation "break-down."

Then Frank related his adventure and Corrajo said:

"In following up the Indians after I left Frank I stumbled into a pit-trap, made by the natives, and had great difficulty in getting out. That was the cause of my delay."

But the old doctor was thinking of the singular incident of the recognition of the cipher-cube by the old Indian, and he said:

"I am now more than ever convinced that the cipher-cube is the clew to an ancient secret of this strange land. Since the old native knew it, it may have a remarkable history, and I regret that the natives now know it is in our possession."

"I think the Indians know what the cipher relates to," said Corrajo.

"How so?" asked the doctor and Mr. Reade, Sr., in a voice.

"The savages passed close by the pit into which he had fallen without seeing me, and among them I saw a half-breed Portuguese—one of those rovers of the pampas who used to make a business of slave-hunting in the days of Brazilian slavery."

"And did you ever hear what was said?" asked the doctor eagerly.

"Yes. The Portuguese half-breed and the old Indian who found the cipher-cube were conversing. I gathered from what they said that they were well aware that the cube contained the secret of a sacred treasure, legends of which had been handed down from father to son in the tribes, but that they were as yet quite as ignorant as ourselves regarding where the treasure was to be found."

"Ah! Had we needed further assurance that there is a treasure to be found by him who can read the cipher, we have it now!" said the doctor.

"Yes, and I can foresee that, led on by the cunning half-breed ex-slave hunter, the natives will seek to wrest the cube from us."

"No doubt of that. But they will have a lively time doing it," said Frank, Jr.

"We shall have to be constantly on the alert, then," Corrajo replied.

Meanwhile during this conversation the Electric Horse was put in motion.

The Amazon was before our explorers to the

northward, and the forest lay in their western pathway.

The gaucho was consulted as to the course to pursue.

He advised that they run a southwestern course along the pampas skirting the forest until they were at a safe distance from the Indians.

This advice was acted upon.

While Frank, Jr., and his father took turns running the Electric Horse, the party turned up their bunks, and sought repose in the interior of the vehicle.

The dawn of day found them on the pampas in a position not far from the Amazon, which makes a great bend southward.

"Now for a breakfast. The river will supply it," cried Corrajo, when the party halted.

He got out hooks and lines, and, accompanied by Pomp and Barney, set out for the river, which they soon reached.

There is a great variety of excellent fish in the Amazon, and Pomp and Barney were soon catching them rapidly, while the gaucho left them saying:

"I shall bring back some turtle eggs."

Turtles are an important article of food in the Amazon country. At almost all times fresh turtle meat can be had, and the eggs are a delicious delicacy, as Corrajo knew.

He soon came back dragging a captured turtle by his lasso, and carrying his hat full of eggs.

These, with the fish secured by Barney and Pomp, made a splendid breakfast for the explorers, and they did ample justice to the meal.

"Now as to our future course, Corrajo," said the doctor, after breakfast.

CHAPTER XIV.

UP IN THE OBSERVATION-BALLOON—CAUGHT IN THE PAMPAS TORNADO.

The doctor had been consulting a recent and reliable map of Brazil, and also the copy of the map on the cipher-cube.

"It seems to me that we should take a north-westerly course," he added.

"Quite right," assented Corrajo. "And to do that we shall have to cut our way through the forest."

"And also cross the Amazon, I think?"

"Yes, doctor. Now if I could only take an observation, observe the extent of the forest, I might select a course so as to traverse the forest at its narrowest point. There are open pampas to the westward, but I know not how far distant."

"If you were up in the air a few hundred feet you could command a view of the surroundings for many miles and thus find out what you wish to know?" said Frank, Jr.

"Certainly. It is indeed most important that I should make such an observation."

"Well, then, you shall do so."

"How do you mean?"

"Maybe I didn't tell you about my hot-air balloon. Well, I have one, and you shall make a 'captive ascension,' and take an observation."

"Excellent!"

"The very thing!"

Corrajo and the doctor thus expressed their satisfaction.

"But have you the necessary appliances for inflation?" the doctor asked.

"Of course; the balloon would be no use else. You know I've done considerable in the flying line, and I think I am pretty well informed about balloons and air-ships," said Frank, Jr.

"It's pointers the young janus could give the man who first invented balloons, bedad!" affirmed Barney.

"Well, lend a hand, you and Pomp," said Frank.

Then, assisted by the Irishman and the darky, the young aeronaut unpacked his balloon. It was a small, ordinary globe balloon, with a basket carriage.

A fire was kindled and the hot-air or gas generator and reservoir appliances placed in position.

The great globe of the balloon was successfully inflated under the direction of Frank, Jr., and the stout "captive-rope" attached to it to prevent its ascending beyond the length of the same was secured to the trunk of a tree.

When all was in readiness for the ascension Corrajo took his place in the basket carriage under the inflated globe, telescope in hand, and Frank, Jr., made ready to cast off the stay-ropes, which besides the main-rope, which was to limit the flight of the balloon, held it to the earth.

Just as the stay-ropes were being cast off Barney clambered into the carriage.

"Begorra, it's meself as wud go wid yez if yez want company!" he exclaimed.

"All right. Come along, Barney," assented Corrajo.

Then he added:

"All ready."

Frank at once gave the word and the stay-ropes were severed.

The balloon arose majestically into the air.

"Have ye any word to send to your friends in the moon?" cried Barney, as he soared aloft.

When the "captive" rope ran out its length the balloon stopped, and Corrajo proceeded to closely scan the country through his telescope.

The wonderful panorama of the Amazon was revealed to him. It was a sight worth a journey across the world to see and Corrajo enjoyed it thoroughly.

But he was intent upon selecting the route for the Electric Horse.

Scanning the forest, Corrajo soon made out a course for the advance of the exploring party. Some distance northward, at a point which they had passed during the night, he saw that the forest was quite narrow, with vast open pampas and the Amazon beyond it.

"That is our route!" said Corrajo, pointing.

"Let me have a peep through the glass. Begob, this reminds me av our trip in the air-ship in Mexico. Arrah, that was sky travelin' for yez while yez be talkin'," said Barney.

Corrajo gave him the glass and Barney looked about through it in every direction.

"Faith, an' it's a foine country. Too foine for haythen nagurs. Be me soul, yez could plant the whole Emerald Isle down here and not miss the land. Begob, if that could be done, thin ould Ireland would be free, and the devil could fly away with the landlords," said the Irishman, duly impressed with the magnitude of the great Brazilian territory.

"But what's that, I dunno?" he added suddenly, with the glass through which he was gazing, turned in the direction whence they had come.

"What do you see?" asked Corrajo.

"That's what I can't make out, sure."

"Let me have the glass."

Barney surrendered the telescope to Corrajo, and the latter looked in the direction indicated by the Irishman, who said:

"There's a black man movin' on the plain foreninst yez, favever it be's."

Corrajo's wonderful keenness of vision served him well now.

In a moment he exclaimed:

"What you saw is a large band of natives, and they are following the trail of the Electric Horse!"

"That news plazes me. We'll have more shindies with them," said Barney.

"More than you wish for yet it may be. I shouldn't wonder if the entire Ticunas tribe was to declare war on us, and hunt us all over Brazil in the hope of recovering the clew to the sacred treasure lost to them so long ago," answered Corrajo, seriously.

As he spoke a gust of wind which came from the south suddenly struck the balloon, causing it to sway as though about to sever the rope which held it to the earth.

Barney uttered a sharp cry and clung to the side of the basket carriage.

Corrajo glanced quickly to the southward.

"Carramba!" he exclaimed, as he saw a dark cloud advancing with lightning-like velocity. "The tormenta—the tornado of the pampas—quick! We must descend or we are lost!" he added, excitedly.

These terrible wind storms come up with magical quickness, and without warning.

Corrajo dropped the telescope and reached for the stop-cock attached to the inflated globe, by means of which its contents could be slowly drawn off when it was desired to descend.

At the same time he shouted down to his friends below:

"The pampas tornado is coming, Mr. Reade! If it strikes the Electric Horse it will be ruined! There is a depression a short distance in a straight southerly course formed by a dry water-way. Run the horse into it for shelter. We are about to descend and will follow."

This warning was instantly heeded.

The Electric Horse was put in motion, and it proceeded swiftly in the direction indicated by Corrajo, and entered the depression whose sides would protect it from the fury of the blast.

But meanwhile Corrajo and Barney were in a situation of extreme peril. The gauchos found that the stop-cock, by means of which he meant to draw off the gas in the balloon globe, would not work. It resisted all his efforts, and there was no other way of gradually exhausting the inflated globe. Were he to perforate it with his knife it would suddenly collapse, and he and Barney would be precipitated to certain death for the balloon would fall like a stone.

A few moments of terror elapsed while Corrajo tugged at the stop-cock, and Barney crossed himself devoutly.

But the gale was increasing each moment, and presently it struck the balloon.

The immense pressure of the atmosphere threatened to burst the gas globe. It swayed and cracked. Something must yield or all was lost. The balloon could not survive the strain a moment. There was but one chance for the lives of the imperiled men. If the globe burst they would fall to death, but if the balloon was released, and thus no longer resisted the pressure of the gale, while it might be carried by the fierce winds they knew not where, there was still a possibility that they might escape with their lives.

Corrajo resolved to take the one desperate chance that presented itself for salvation.

Quickly he reached down and severed the rope that held the balloon to the earth with a few rapid strokes of his hunting knife.

The rope was no sooner cut than the balloon shot forward before the gale with tremendous velocity straight toward the army of savages who were approaching in the distance.

"It's gone we are now! Worra! Worra! Will I ever see Mrs. Shea an' the childer again, I dunno!" wailed Barney.

Meanwhile Frank, Jr., and the others witnessed the escape of the captive balloon in horror.

CHAPTER XV.

FRANK, JR., EXPERIMENTS WITH HIS GREAT BURNING-GLASS.

"THEY are lost! Poor Barney! Unfortunate Corrajo!" cried Frank, Jr., as he saw the balloon containing his friends carried away before the tornado.

The wind storm swept over the depression of the dry water-course in which the Electric Horse and carriage containing the companions whom the occupants of the balloon had left behind were without injuring them, and the wonderful invention sustained no injury.

"Why does not Corrajo let off the gas from the inflated globe, and slowly descend?" asked the doctor, who had not seen the gauchos sever the rope which secured the balloon.

But Frank had witnessed Corrajo's futile efforts to turn off the gas and accomplish a descent, and he had seen him sever the rope.

The young inventor understood the situation exactly, and he explained it to the doctor and the others.

But Frank did not himself know just how the stop-cock had gotten out of order.

Dr. Vaneyke experienced the keenest solicitude for Corrajo's safety, and the others, sharing his anxiety for both the imperiled men, watched the course of the balloon.

Frank had another telescope, and when the fury of the tornado had passed he turned it toward the balloon, which had become a black speck scarcely visible in the dim distance.

While he watched it the balloon passed beyond the range of the glass, and was entirely lost to sight.

"We must follow them, father!" cried Frank, Jr., as he put down the glass.

"By all means," said the doctor.

"Certainly. I do not think any of us dreamed of deserting our friends," Mr. Reade remarked.

"Golly, I'm mighty sorry for Barney and Corrajo, but dis ehile is just a-huggin' himself cause he didn't go long wif 'em," said Pomp.

The storm had spent its fury, and it was now safe to bring the Electric Horse and carriage out on the pampas again. The electricity was properly applied, and the giant metal horse drew the carriage up the sloping bank upon the level plain, and started swiftly in pursuit of the lost balloon.

"It is one of the peculiarities of these pampas tornadoes that they subside about as quickly as they come up," remarked the doctor.

The passage of the gale had dispelled every cloud and the sun shone bright and clear.

The pampas afforded excellent footing for the Electric Horse, and for the time a full head of electricity was turned on.

The electric conveyance raced away almost as swiftly as the wind which had carried the balloon before it.

Some hours elapsed, and then Frank, Jr., who was now running the electric machine and keeping a bright lookout ahead, uttered an exclamation indicative of a discovery.

"What is it?" asked Mr. Reade, Sr.

"Have you discovered them?" questioned the doctor.

"I think so."

"Heaven be praised if they have miraculously escaped death," said the old naturalist fervently.

Pomp, in the exuberance of his delight, turned an impromptu flip-flop, and came near landing on the pampas.

"Yes," continued Frank, Jr., "I certainly dis-

cern two dark objects resembling men coming toward us, and behind them, also, moving this way, is a dark, compact mass which I cannot yet make out the character of."

"No doubt a band of natives after our friends," said the doctor.

"You are right," said Frank, Jr., a few moments later.

"Yes, the two objects I first saw are men, and Barney and Corrajo. Hurrah! They cannot be much hurt, for they are running for their lives, pursued by a large party of natives," Frank added.

"Then connect the second battery—I'll run the horse. This is a matter of life or death for our friends. Hasten, Frank!" cried Mr. Reade, Sr.

Frank surrendered the main lever and ran down into the interior of the carriage and turned on the power of the concealed battery gradually.

Corrajo and Barney had indeed escaped the storm and reached the earth in safety. As the storm which had carried them so far subsided Corrajo renewed his efforts to turn off the gas within the globe, and he finally succeeded in accomplishing this. The balloon came to the earth, and the imperiled men alighted just in time to see an army of natives—the same whom Corrajo had discerned by the aid of the telescope—emerge from the adjacent forest in which they had sought shelter.

Then a thrilling race began, for, abandoning the balloon, Corrajo and Barney started at full speed in the direction whence they had come, and the natives pursued them.

The gauchos and Barney discovered the Electric Horse while it was far away, and in the thought that their friends were coming to the rescue they found encouragement to exert themselves in the race, which must otherwise have been for them entirely hopeless.

But Frank, Jr., as the Electric Horse drew nearer the fugitives, carefully made a close approximately accurate calculation of the relative rates of speed of the metal horse, the pursued and their pursuers. From this he drew the positive deduction that Corrajo and Barney would surely be overtaken by the enemy before the latter were within rifle range from the carriage.

The result of his calculation Frank, Jr., communicated to his friends.

"What is to be done?" asked the doctor.

"I have it. I'll blind the savages and give them a red-hot sun-bath at the same time!" cried Frank, Jr., cheerfully.

The doctor looked perplexed.

But Mr. Reade, Sr., smiled approvingly as he said:

"That's the idea, Frank."

Then he took his son's place at the lever.

"I don't comprehend your meaning, Frank," said the doctor.

"Why, you see I've an immense burning glass with me. It's in the supply locker, under the lower floor. You recollect how in ancient times, at the siege of Troy or some other old place or other, by means of great long-distance burning-glasses, the besieged fired the enemies' vessels in the harbor?" said Frank, Jr.

"Yes, yes."

"Well, that's just what I'm a-going to try on the savages," replied Frank.

Then he and Pomp descended into the interior of the vehicle, and brought up the great burning-glass. It was a circular mirror in six sections which could readily be put together. There was a standard for it to rest on at the center, and this support was provided with a pivot by means of which the great round mirror could be inclined so as to catch the rays of the sun, converge them, and reflect the same in any desired direction.

Frank and Pomp quickly put the great burning-glass together, set up the standard, and placed the huge mirror-wheel upon it.

When all was in readiness, it was so large that it covered a great part of the top of the carriage.

While this was being done the speed of the Electric Horse had been moderated so that the movement of the wonderful carriage did not impede the work of Frank, Jr., and his assistant.

"Now then to catch the sun's rays and reflect them in a scorching, concentrated blaze right upon the Indians!" cried Frank, when all was arranged as he wished.

"Light travels with a speed that exceeds the flight of a bullet, and its power of reflection reaches much further than the range of rifles," said the doctor.

"And the heat accumulated by the tropical sun on the great mirror will be sufficient for your purpose if the laws of calorifics do not prove false," he added.

Frank depressed the mirror on one side at an angle of thirty degrees and caught the full glare of the sun. The great burning-glass was lighted

up like a circular sea of living flame in an instant.

"We are now about in range for your experiment," said the doctor.

"And the natives are getting pretty close to our friends. Now I'll let them have the red-hot sun shower," answered Frank, Jr.

Then he reflected the scorching, concentrated rays of the sun from the burning-glass directly over the heads of Corrajo and Barney, and threw the fire upon the savages.

A pandemonium of shrieks and yells ensued. The scorched and blinded savages turned their backs and danced about like mad.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE ELECTRIC SAWS AT WORK.

FRANK, JR.'s experiment with the great burning-glass was in truth a grand success.

The astounded and frightened natives, blinded and scorched by the intense light and heat thrown directly upon them from the young inventor's wonderful reflector, continued to yell and leap about, seeking to evade the glaring flame.

Those in the front ranks of the pursuers of Barney and Corrajo pushed backward upon their comrades, and the band came to a halt, and was thrown into confusion.

"The swarthy rascals don't seem to enjoy the sunbath. Hurrah! They are retreating!" cried Frank, Jr., in great delight, as the natives began to fall back.

"Roast dem, Mars Frank! Cook dem till da is clean done! Gollie! da act like de wedder was gettin' berry warm out dar 'bout dis time ob day!" cried Pomp, grinning from ear to ear in delight.

"As the savages are naked there is nothing to shield them. No wonder they cannot endure the heat," said Mr. Reade, Sr.

"The burning-glass is a most effective weapon just now. See the blacks scamper! Corrajo and Barney are saved," remarked Dr. Vaneyke.

The gaucha and the Irishman were still running toward the Electric Horse, and Barney now shouted:

"Begorra, but it's an eligint bit av light yez are throwin' on a dark subject, Master Frank. Be dad, an' if the nagurs wasn't thicker thin fleas, it's a ruction we'd av shown them. It's buckin' against the young janus from America that the hathen gits left at, be gobl!"

The Electric Horse continued to advance, and Frank, Jr., kept on flashing the light from the great reflector in burning rays on the retreating savages.

Soon Barney and Corrajo were picked up, and they were heartily congratulated upon their remarkable escape.

"Where's the balloon?" asked Frank, Jr.

"Back yonder on the pampas," replied Corrajo.

"Then we'll follow up the natives until we reach it."

"Yes, we must recover the balloon," said Mr. Reade, Sr.

"We may need it again," the doctor added.

"And it's not much damaged," said Corrajo.

"I have the material in the locker with which to repair it," Frank assured them.

The pursuit of the savages was continued, and the burning glass kept them in full flight.

The balloon was discovered further on, and stopping the horse when the Indians were at a safe distance, the adventurers alighted from the carriage, and the collapsed balloon was picked up and placed in the locker.

"The savages are after the cipher cube," said Corrajo.

"Why do you think so?" asked the doctor.

"Because they were led on by the half-breed Portuguese and the old Ticunas warrior whom Frank, Jr., saw recognize the mysterious cube."

"Well, it will be a very chilly day in Brazil when they get it, unless some unforeseen accident happens to us," replied Frank, Jr.

"But what did you make out when you took an observation from the balloon?" asked Mr. Reade, Sr.

Corrajo acquainted his companions with his discovery of a desirable route through the narrow belt of forest which he had sighted, and then he indicated the proper course to take toward it.

The Electric Horse was turned in the usual manner, and started forward toward the forest in the direction advised by the gaucha.

As they went along Corrajo drew from a little pouch a handful of dry leaves looking somewhat like tea, and eating some of them he tendered some to Barney.

"Fat's him? Is it the koinid of 'bacea they use in this heathen country, I dunno?" asked the Irishman, who seemed a little doubtful about accepting the herbs.

"No," replied Corrajo, "they are coca-leaves."

"You need not fear to eat them, Barney," said the old naturalist, reassuringly. "The coca plant belongs to the order of vegetable tonics, and has long found a place in the materia medica of more civilized lands. The leaves give strength and appease the appetite. The natives always carry coca-leaves with them when they are bound upon long journeys, and it is quite surprising the amount of fatigue they can endure without tasting food, while under the influence of the stimulating leaves."

It was high noon when the Amazon forest, toward which the explorers had been steadily advancing, after the rout of the savages, was reached.

In the shade of the great woods the Electric Horse was stopped, and the great mirror which had been taken apart when there was no further use for it at this time, was carefully packed away.

Corrajo then took his gun, and he and Pomp went into the forest to look for game while Frank, Jr., and his father assisted by the doctor and Barney set about getting the great electric saws with which they hoped to demolish the trees in their pathway in readiness for use.

While they were thus engaged Frank, Jr., discovered a dense smoke arising from the pampas far away in the direction whence they had come.

The young inventor at once procured his telescope, and after looking through it he announced: "The pampas is on fire!"

"Ah! Then the heat from the burning glass must have caused the conflagration," said the doctor.

"Yes, I observed that the grass covering a large extent of the pampas over which we chased the Indians was very dry," assented Frank, Jr.

"Is there danger of the fire reaching us?" asked Mr. Reade, Sr.

"I think not. The grass for a long distance behind us is quite green," replied Frank, Jr.

"And of a different quality, owing to the superior moisture of the soil hereabouts. We have no cause for alarm I think," said the doctor.

"Then the fire is really a lucky accident for us," Frank remarked.

"Bedad, it is thin. It will kape the heathen back from follerin' av us while we git a good start until the woods Oi'm thinkin'."

"You're quite right, Barney, and now let's see how our electric saws will work," said Mr. Reade, Sr.

Two large steel saws of the best tempered metal, such as are used in the portable saw mills by the lumbermen of Michigan and other portions of the United States, were taken from the locker.

Then there were two frames provided for each saw with braces of metal to support them, and with a guard for the reception of the saws which set into a metal groove in a bar, across the top of the frame, with the side containing the teeth outward. The grooves for the saws passed through the top bar, and on the backs of the saws were projecting bolts, by means of which they were secured in the grooves so that the saws could move backward and forward along them.

The entire frame was mounted upon rollers, so that the saw could be moved about readily, and pushed forward as, plying backward and forward, beyond the grooves, from which all but the ends were free, it cut its way through the tree with which it was brought in contact.

The entire mechanism was practical and complete.

The motive power was supplied, of course, by the electricity from the battery in the carriage.

There were the necessary bars and wires to connect the saw with the battery, which could be easily adjusted, for the battery had been originally constructed to admit of these and other attachments.

The explorers quickly set up the electric saws. Two of them were placed in position at once against separate trees. The grooves in which the saws were to play were well oiled, and then the attachments were made with the battery. At once the saws began to move backward and forward, and to cut the great tree trunks rapidly. The saws were placed on the sides of the trees toward the electric horse, so that in falling there would be no danger of their descending upon the carriage or the metal steed, as trees fall away from the point of severance.

"Everything works like a charm!" cried Frank, Jr., in delight, as the party witnessed the success of the electric saws.

"It is another triumph for you, my young friend. But how are you a-going to get the fallen trees out of the way?"

"Oh, that is easily done. We only require a narrow road for the passage of the Electric Horse and carriage, and as the trees fall we can roll the saws aside, back up the carriage, hook on to the

trees with chain attached to the rear axle and snake them aside as we advance," replied the young inventor.

"You have foreseen every difficulty. The way can be readily cleared in the manner you propose," replied the doctor.

"And we can keep right on cutting our way through the woods, only pausing in our work now and then long enough to file the saws when they become dull."

"True enough, and many of the trees are not large and will quickly fall," said Mr. Reade, Sr.

"Be dad, Master Frank, if iver we get back to the United States I'll give yez a contract to clear up me farrum which I'm jist after buyin' out wist. Ye bate the stame saw-mills clane out, so yez do!" said Barney, in admiration.

Meantime the party looked back at the burning pampas from time to time, and they were gratified to observe that the fire was receding to the northward.

They knew that the Indians would be compelled to continue their retreat before the conflagration.

CHAPTER XVII.

AN ENCOUNTER WITH THE KING OF SNAKEDOM.

MEANWHILE Corrajo and Pomp had proceeded some distance into the woods.

They saw numerous monkeys, and a great variety of birds of beautiful plumage, but it was not until they emerged into a grassy oasis that Corrajo sighted the game which he expected to find, because he had discovered their tracks on the pampas at the edge of the wood.

Suddenly, under the sunlight shewn that glistened golden over the emerald sward, the gaucha saw a troop of beautiful, graceful, spotted creatures, resembling fawns of the fallow deer.

Corrajo and Pomp were just at the edge of the sylvan "interglade" when the animals were discerned.

The former drew his companion back into the shelter of the trees quickly.

"Am dem fellers deer?" asked Pomp, in a whisper.

"No. They are a herd of pampas roebuck. Their flesh, however, is as tender and juicy as the finest venison in the world."

"Den dey am our meat."

"Yes, but we must 'still stalk' them. I think they are moving toward a watering-place, having already browsed sufficiently on the pasture here. I'll try a shot, and you shall do the same when we get nearer."

They crept along the edge of the timber, and presently each fired and they brought down two of the herd which they dressed, and laden with the choicest portions of the meat, set out to return to the Electric Horse.

Presently they came upon a beaten path.

"Hi! I reckon dis am a route dem colored heathen trables!" cried Pomp, halting in the path.

"No. It is a tapir path—worn by those animals in their way to the river beyond this narrow belt of forest."

"Yah, an' dar's some of dem comin', I specs."

Just then a herd of tapirs emerged from the timber and came along the path at an awkward gallop.

"Da looks like de rhinoceros what I seed 'fore now."

"They are of the same species."

"Good to eat?"

"No. We do not want such food."

They turned aside and permitted the pachyderms to pass unmolested. The tapir is not very dangerous, and only attacks man when cornered.

The unwieldy animals soon disappeared in a sumac thicket.

Corrajo and Pomp resumed their way. The latter had fallen behind the gaucha some distance, having paused to collect some strange feathers dropped from the body of the beautifully-colored Amazon macaw, when an alarmed cry from his lips caused Corrajo to turn about quickly.

"Carramba! The great serpent! The black man is in deadly peril!" cried the gaucha.

He beheld Pomp struggling on the ground kicking and yelling with all his might.

The poor fellow was enveloped by great dark coils of a serpent. He had been entrapped by the huge snake. It was a gigantic boa-constrictor. The dreaded serpent had been coiled about the limb of a tree above Pomp's head. Suddenly he had dropped downward and coiled about Pomp like a flash.

The monster was slowly tightening his folds about the darkey and threatened to crush him to death.

A rescue must not be delayed for a moment, as Corrajo well knew. But he feared to dis-

charge a shot at the boa-constrictor, the danger of hitting Pomp was so great.

"Take um off! Take um off! De big snake done broke me in two. Golly! ough! He done squeeze the breff clean out of dis chile. Ough!" yelled Pomp.

The folds of the serpent had bound the arms of the darky to his sides, and he could not use them to draw a weapon.

His gun had fallen from his grasp, of course, and now he was utterly powerless.

Upon the brave gaúcho Pomp depended for the preservation of his life now.

Corrajo had encountered the mighty monarch of South American snakes before that day, and he determined to resort to his knife as a weapon with which to attack the boa.

The gaúcho drew off his poucho, and hastily wrapping the garment about his left arm, he drew his long and keen-bladed hunting-knife in his right hand, and shouted:

"Have courage! I mean to save you, Pomp." "Den make haste. I feel like I was mos' done ready fo' ter tend my own funeral, 'deed I does," groaned Pomp, continuing his futile attempts to liberate himself.

The monkeys in the trees, alarmed at the sight of the boa, which is their most dreaded enemy, chattered and screamed. The birds flew away shrieking an alarm in shrill voices, and the unequal strife between the man and the serpent went on.

But now Corrajo was ready to take a hand in the strife.

"I'se a goner. I'se sent for an' got to go, suah!" wailed Pomp in despair.

But the crafty gaúcho was creeping upon the great boa. Nearer and nearer he glided, but suddenly the huge creature elevated his head and a mad hiss told he had discovered Corrajo.

The gaúcho was now near enough, he thought, for his purpose, and all at once he thrust forward his left arm, bound about with the poucho as a guard, and with his right hand made a stab at the boa's throat.

The aim of the Brazilian was accurate. His keen blade penetrated the neck of the serpent, and he gave the weapon a tremendous wrench as it went in and half severed the hideous head from the scaly body.

The great crushing folds of the boa gradually relaxed, and Pomp struggled free from his entwining grasp and regained his feet.

Snatching up his gun the irate darky clubbed it, and began to shower blows upon the writhing monster, which had really received his death blow from Corrajo's knife.

"Take dat, an' dat! You'se jumped de wrong colored person dis season, mistah snake!" cried Pomp.

Pomp's vengeance was only satiated when the snake was dead. Then he grasped Corrajo's hand, and said warmly:

"You'se de stuff. Dat knife done de biz fo' de big snake."

"It was a narrow escape," replied Corrajo. Well might he say so, for the boa was fully thirty feet in length.

Corrajo and Pomp soon arrived at the edge of the forest where their friends were at work with the electric saws.

They had made surprising progress.

While Corrajo and the darky gave expression to the wonder and admiration occasioned them by the perfect working of the sawing appliance, the others signified their pleasure at the sight of the game the hunters had secured, which assured them there was a feast in store for all.

Presently, after Pomp had related his thrilling adventure with the boa-constrictor, as a peculiar looking tree was being sawed down, Frank, Jr., noticed a white fluid exuding from it.

"Why, the juice of that tree looks like milk. What is it, doctor?" he asked.

The doctor's botanical knowledge was by no means limited, and he replied:

"That is a cow-tree; the sap is drunk by the natives, who sometime tap those trees as you of the United States do the sugar-maple.

"This country is full of botanical curiosities. Now, yonder is a uinay tree. It serves as a sort of barometer for the natives."

"What! Can they foretell a change of the weather by it?"

"Yes. When its flowers close their corollas here is a rain storm coming."

"Well, it seems to me the petals are pretty well shrunk up now."

The doctor put on his spectacles and took a closer look.

"It's just as you say. The flowers are closing. It will soon rain," he said.

"I don't like that news," replied Frank, glancing back over the pampas.

"I understand. You are thinking the rain will put out the fire on the pampas and enable the army of savages to follow us up."

"Yes, doctor."

"Then we must work fast. Barney, help Pomp prepare a meal," said Mr. Reade, Sr.

The felling of the trees was continued rapidly, and they were heaped aside as we have heard Frank explain they would be. Several times the saws were filed up, and save these halts and a short pause to partake of the roebuck steak, the work of cutting a path went steadily on, and presently the explorers, with the Electric Horse, entered an interglade.

CHAPTER XVIII.

TRAILED BY THE SAVAGES—CAUGHT IN A BIS-CACHA BURROW.

BEYOND the opening in the forest designated as an "interglade," the timber seemed to be small, and more like a jungle than the woods through which the explorers had passed.

The electric saws were placed on the carriage when the "open" was reached, and the party all got aboard, and the electric steed quickly traversed the clear space.

When its western limit was reached it was discovered that the forest beyond was composed, as a distant view had led the adventurers to suppose, mainly of trees, bushes and vines.

Once more the saws were brought into service, and the task of sawing a passage through the jungle began.

The advance was now made much more swiftly than before, and night found our friends still hard at work cutting the undergrowth and opening a path.

The barometer tree had not given false warning of a coming storm, for before night closed down in darkness the rain began to fall, and a heavy shower ensued, the greatest volume of which passed to the northward.

"There is water enough to quench the fire on the pampas in this shower," said the doctor.

The entire party had sought the shelter of the interior of the carriage, the sides had been closed and it was dry and comfortable within, while the rain descended in torrents without.

Frank, Jr., had taken advantage of the storm to secure a supply of water which was caught in several large buckets. The water tank was not yet empty, and though they soon expected to reach the Amazon, the young explorer's past experiences taught him to always be on the safe side.

The interior of the vehicle was illuminated by an electric light, and Dr. Vaneyke got out the cipher-cube, and his maps and drawings, and also some copies of the ancient writings supposed to be the work of the old Franciscan monks, and found on the rocks in Peru and Brazil.

The doctor spent the evening in trying to study out the mysterious cipher while an animated conversation between the other members of the party went on about him.

"It seems too bad that so much of this fertile land should be populated only by savage tribes," said Frank, Jr.

"So it does," assented his father. "This is the largest state in South America, and the only empire in the new world. The Amazon river alone drains eight hundred square miles of Brazilian territory."

"And Dom Pedro reigns over it all?" asked Frank, Jr.

"Yes, executive power is vested in the emperor. But Brazil is a sort of limited monarchy, for legislative authority rests with the senate and chamber of deputies."

"The empire is divided into several states, I think?"

"Yes, I believe there are about twenty provinces."

"Well, Brazil is a great country, and besides possessing a fertile soil it is rich in minerals."

"Indeed it is, and many precious stones are found here. The diamond mines which abound yield largely. They used to all belong to the state, but now some of them are owned by private parties."

"Dom Pedro is the best emperor the Brazilians have ever had, isn't he?"

"Yes, and he has greatly improved the manufactures in his country by the introduction of American machinery."

"It strikes me that there isn't much education in Brazil."

"I think about three-fourths of the people are illiterate, and yet I am informed that compulsory education exists in several provinces."

"What is the religion of the civilized people?"

"The established religion is Roman Catholic, and the clergy is supported by the state. You must know, Frank, I read up on Brazil just before we left home, while you were busy with preparations for our start."

Just then the conversation between Frank, Jr., and his father was interrupted. All heard a

scratching sound on the outside of the rear door.

"It must be some animal. I'll go on deck and try to get a shot at it," said Frank, picking up his rifle.

"Be careful. It may be a tiger!" admonished Mr. Reade.

Frank gained the deck. The storm had now subsided and the overcast sky was clearing. The light from moon and stars was not bright, but it enabled Frank to see a long grayish body of catlike shape crawling upward over the rear of the vehicle by the aid of sharp claws.

The young inventor thought the creature was a puma, an animal much resembling the panther of our own forests. The great cat suddenly uttered a strange scream like the cry of a child in distress, and his eyes blazed as he saw Frank.

Corrajo heard the scream of the puma, and he bounded up the stairs and gained the roof.

But as the gaúcho reached Frank's side the young man discharged his rifle just as the puma was in the very act of making a leap at him.

Frank's aim was true, his bullet penetrated the heart of the puma, and he rolled to the earth.

The creature was a fine specimen of his species, and Frank removed its hide and kept it as a trophy.

The party was not further disturbed by wild beasts during that night, though they heard the voices of the fierce forest denizens until day dawned.

With the first appearance of light the work of sawing their way forward was resumed and continued all day.

That evening they at last emerged upon the broad pampas once more. The vast plains extended for many miles. But afar they saw the faint dark outlines of a fringe of timber which Corrajo said marked the course of the Amazon, which they must cross when they reached it.

The entire party felt the need of rest, and so the electricity was turned off from the machinery of the colossal horse, and after a good meal had been partaken of they all entered the carriage and sought repose.

The night was well advanced when all were suddenly awakened by a startled cry from Corrajo, who had awakened some time previously, and believing he heard the murmur of distant voices ascended to the roof to take an observation.

As his friends sprang up from their bunks at the first shout uttered by the gaúcho, he called out:

"The savages are coming! Quick! Start the Electric Horse!"

Mr. Reade, Sr., rushed to the engineer's post and seizing the main lever he turned on the electricity and put the giant metal horse in motion without a second's delay.

Frank ran up to the deck, and beheld the army of natives from whom Barney and Corrajo had been saved by the burning-glass, advancing under the moonlight along the road cut through the adjacent jungle by the electric saws.

The savages had been advancing steadily in pursuit of the explorers since the rain put out the pampas fire, and the delay occasioned by the cutting of a road through the woods had enabled the natives to overtake the Electric Horse.

They had already discovered it, and were creeping up in a stealthy way, as though to accomplish a surprise, when Corrajo saw them.

The gaúcho's shout informed the Indians that their intended surprise was a failure, and now they came rushing at the electric conveyance, making the forest and pampas echo with their wild, fierce yells.

"There is nothing to be gained by making a stand, and against such an army we might vainly throw away our ammunition, so we'll show them our speed," said Mr. Reade, Sr., as he allowed the full power of the upper battery to pass to the mechanical horse. Followed by the savages the Electric Horse sped away swiftly.

But presently its speed began to slacken. The wheels sank deeply, sometimes being suddenly buried to the hubs, notwithstanding their wide tires. The metal horse plunged down to his knees, as though stepping in pitfalls. The carriage was racked and jolted frightfully, and there was the most imminent danger that it would be overturned or the machinery broken.

"We have run into a warren of biscachas!" cried Corrajo. "Merci! we are lost!" he added, in the greatest alarm.

The Electric Horse had really run into an extensive burrow of the singular South American rodent, which undermines and burrows the ground like our marmot or "prairie dog," only that the biscachas dig deeper.

To advance now was impossible without court-

teous destruction of the machinery of the

Electric Horse, and in any event nothing like speed could be attained.

"We shall have to stand a siege right here. We are in a trap, Frank, but the accident which may doom us all is no fault of our management," said Mr. Reade, Sr., as Frank, Jr., and Corrajo descended from the deck.

CHAPTER XIX.

BESIEGED—FRANK, JR., TRIES AN EXPERIMENT.

The climax of peril seemed to have arrived for our adventurous explorers. They could not back out of the marmot-burrow without bringing into requisition leverage appliances to lift the deeply buried legs of the metal steed, and pry up the imbedded wheels of the electric carriage. And to accomplish such results it would be necessary for them to leave the shelter of the vehicle, and expose themselves to certain destruction at the hands of the savages.

Mr. Reade, Sr., was entirely right. The explorers must stand a siege, there on the open pampas, against the army of natives.

"The carriage must serve us as a fort now! Fortunately, we are well supplied with food and water as well as ammunition," said Frank, Jr.

The sides of the carriage being already closed, there was little in the way of preparation against the impending attack to be done, and we have seen that the perforated sheet-iron plates covering the vehicle were a protection against the weapons of the natives.

There were a number of loop-holes in the sides of the carriage which were provided with sliding doors that were usually closed, but now they were unmasked, and the little party stationed themselves at them with their rifles in their hands.

Dr. Vanayke carefully wiped his spectacles and adjusted them on his head.

"Give me a rifle, too, Frank. I think I can see to pick off a savage when they come within range. My glasses are excellent ones," the old gentleman said.

"Bravo! A sharpshooter in spectacles! Here is the weapon, doctor, and I wish you success," replied Frank, Jr., and he gave the old naturalist a Winchester rifle.

"The doctor used to be an excellent shot. His skillful marksmanship once saved my life," remarked Corrajo, seriously.

Meanwhile the enemy had advanced rapidly, and Frank, Jr., who, with Corrajo, was watching them through the loop-holes in the rear of the vehicle, called out:

"I see the old fellow who recognized the cipher cube."

"And I have discovered the half-breed Portuguese renegade, of whom I told you!" announced Corrajo, a moment subsequently.

From this the party were really convinced that the pertinacity with which the natives pursued them was certainly due to their determination to secure the cipher cube.

The savages were soon near enough to discover the reason why the Electric Horse and carriage remained stationary, and their exultant yells proclaimed that they were now confident of victory.

Barney was as utterly reckless of danger as ever, and he was in his element at the prospect of a fight.

"It's powder and lead we'll trate the nagurs wid now! Begob, here they come, chargin' foreninst us like mad! Whoop! Let the hathens have their rations!" he cried.

Discharging arrows from a hundred bows, making the pampas ring again with their wild, thrilling war-cries the savages charged.

They were met with a volley from the rifles of the besieged.

But the impetus of the attack was only momentarily checked by the volley, and spreading out, they came at the vehicle from both sides.

"Now for the electric battery of Winchester rifles again!" shouted Frank, Jr.

In a trice the port-holes of the battery were unmasked and the electrical connection made with it.

Then from each side of the vehicle burst forth a terrible discharge accompanied by crashing detonations. The repeating rifles kept up a continuous fire until the cartridges contained in them were exhausted and the enemy were compelled to retreat.

"Dat's de music to make dem rascals dance!" shouted Pomp, as the roar of the battery resounded.

The savages drew off out of rifle range, and seemed to hold a consultation; then a tall, evil-looking fellow, clothed in a semi-civilized costume and whose color proclaimed he had white blood in his veins, advanced, holding out his empty hand as a signal for a parley.

"That's the Portuguese," exclaimed Corrajo, "and he wants to talk."

"Well, let him go ahead. Perhaps you can make out what he says, Corrajo," said Mr. Reade, Sr.

"I think I shall be able to understand him," assented the gaucho.

Under the moonlight, which more clearly revealed his repellent features as he drew nearer, the fellow came on, but he halted when he had arrived within hailing distance, and began to jabber away in a strange dialect in which Portuguese, Spanish and native words were intermingled.

"What does he say?" asked Frank, Jr., eagerly, when the half-breed paused.

"I make out the sense of his harangue, but not all his words. The rascal says we are in his power, and that we shall all be put to death if we do not accede to his terms."

"It's countin' his chickens afore they hatched, the yaller nagur's ather doin'," said Barney.

"Dat's wat's de matter, suah!" put in Pomp.

"And the wretch also says that we can only save ourselves by delivering the cipher-cube to him and getting out of the Ticunas country as quickly as we can."

"We don't scare so easily," said Frank, Jr.

"The half-breed said in conclusion that if we surrendered the cipher cube—he called it the sacred cube—he would draw off the Indians and allow us to retreat unmolested."

"Tell him we mean to fight it out on this line. If he was so sure of us as he pretends, he would not make this offer," said Mr. Reade, Sr., resolutely.

Corrajo was about to translate what Mr. Reade said, when Frank, Jr., exclaimed:

"Hold on, Corrajo. I see the sky is becoming overcast again, and it will soon be very dark. I've an idea for a ruse."

"What do you mean, Frank? It seems to me darkness will favor the attack of the enemy," said Mr. Reade, Sr.

"It will also favor my project. Let me try it."

"All right, Frank. Your ideas always prove good."

"Well, then, Corrajo, you just say to Mr. Half and half that there is some dissentior among us, and that we want an hour to consider his proposal."

"What is it the young janus has got in his head now, I dunno?" muttered Barney.

Corrajo translated what Frank, Jr., said, and understanding the communication, the half-breed replied:

"We will wait an hour. Then I shall again demand the sacred cube."

This answer was made known by Corrajo to his friends, and they saw the Portuguese retire to the ranks of the natives.

Then Frank, Jr., went on and explained the ruse which he hoped would accomplish the salvation of the party.

They all approved of it.

Then the young inventor proceeded to get out a canister containing dynamite cartridges, such as are used in mining and for blasting, and which are exploded at long distances by means of electricity.

Next he produced two coils of wire made of maleable metal, which could be easily bent as desired.

After the cartridges and wires were placed conveniently at hand, Frank, Jr., directed Barney and Pomp to get out a pair of stout wagon "jacks," which were plated with iron, and intended ordinarily to be used to lift the axles of the carriage, when it was desired to remove the wheels and oil the axles.

It was a part of Frank, Jr.'s, plan to attempt, when the darkness became complete, to use the jacks to pry up the wheels, and extricate the horse of metal from the marmot burrow. He thought this might be accomplished if, undisturbed by the enemy, they were permitted to leave the vehicle and apply the jacks, while at the same time a slow and steady retrograde movement was imparted to steed and vehicle by means of the electricity. They had not advanced far into the burrow, and though it would require some little time he thought that they might succeed in backing out in the way purposed if the Indians did not make such an attack, while their efforts were in progress, as to compel them to abandon them.

But it might be presumed that the crafty savages, when darkness fell, would send out scouts to watch them near by, even though the main army remained in their present position. If they were discovered by such scouts in the attempt to retreat, a single yell would bring the entire force down on them.

While Frank, Jr., thought he could not, perhaps, prevent the approach of a scout, he had devised a plan whereby he hoped to retard the advance of the main army.

It was for this purpose that he meant the dynamite cartridges should serve him.

When all was in readiness Frank gave Pomp and Barney certain instructions, which he repeated over to them several times, until he was assured that they understood precisely what was required of them.

Presently moon and stars were obscured by the clouds, and when the darkness became complete Frank, Jr., gave Barney and Pomp each a canister of the dynamite cartridges and each took hold of the end of one of the two coils of wire.

Then the Irishman and the darky crept out of the vehicle, and while the wire coils were permitted to unwind as they drew them out the brave fellows advanced in opposite directions.

CHAPTER XX.

THE DISCHARGE OF THE ELECTRIC CARTRIDGES.

WHILE Barney, under cover of the darkness, made his way forward from the carriage in the direction of the position occupied by the natives, Pomp advanced from the other side.

It did not require much exertion for them to unwind and draw out the wire from the coils in the carriage as they pressed forward, and they made no sound.

When they were about equally distant from the carriage, both Barney and Pomp halted, then they proceeded to deposit dynamite cartridges on the earth in a long line parallel with the carriage. The cartridges were pretty thickly strewn, and the wire was run along and connected with each of them by means of a small, almost closed hook into which it readily slipped.

The perilous task of planting the cartridges was soon completed.

Then Barney and Pomp began to retrace their way toward the carriage.

They accomplished their retreat in the same stealthy manner as they had made their advance, and both gained the electric conveyance undiscovered by the enemy.

The return of the Irishman and the darky was greeted joyfully, for their comrades in peril had experienced great anxiety and suspense during their absence.

So much depended upon the result of Frank's experiment, that the excitement consequent thereto rendered Mr. Reade, Sr., and Dr. Vanayke somewhat nervous, and the former said, as soon as Barney and Pomp returned:

"Now, lose no time! To work with the jacks while I run the battery."

"And I will lend a hand," said the old naturalist, who was pacing up and down the carriage floor unable to keep still.

"All right. Now out with the jacks," responded Frank, Jr.

The door in the rear of the carriage was noiselessly opened, and the great wagon jacks were lifted out.

The electric lights had been extinguished when the savages first came up, and so they would not betray the fact to the enemy should a change in the position of the vehicle be accomplished.

All the party excepting Mr. Reade, Sr., left the carriage.

Pomp and Barney adjusted one of the powerful levers under the front axle, the wheels of which were the most deeply imbedded in the burrow, and manned that appliance.

Frank, Jr., Corrajo and the doctor at the same time so placed the other jack as to obtain a powerful leverage under the hindquarters of the horse, which had the most weight on them, and consequently had sunk the deepest.

The power of leverage is well understood by our readers, of course. Indeed, it is so wonderful that a great scientist has said that he could move the world if he had a lever long enough.

When the levers were in position, and the men who were to work them were ready to apply their strength, Frank, Jr., in a whisper communicated with his father.

The old gentleman then reversed the action of the nicely adjusted machinery, placing a brake in position to prevent forward action, and gradually produced a retrograde motion.

"In unison with this the efforts of the men at the jacks" were exerted.

The metal steed and the attached vehicle began to move slightly. The first attempt gained something, and the party were encouraged to persevere.

Again and again the jacks were moved, and worked simultaneously with the electric machinery.

The horse and carriage were being slowly, though surely, backed out of the burrow.

But all at once a sound broke the pervading quietude of the night.

A wild, piercing alarm-yell rang out near by. "Heavens!" ejaculated Frank, Jr. "A spy from the enemy has approached, and discovered what we are about."

"His yell has alarmed the natives," added Corrajo.

Almost at once a chorus of yells from the main body of the enemy informed the explorers that the savages were advancing.

"Be dad, it's a ruction wid the cartridges that's comin' now. Be gob, it's not long range foightin' Oi'm in love wid. Bad luck to the nagurs, will I iver git a chance at 'em, to bate their heads wid me shillalah loike a christian," said Barney, regretfully.

"Now, then, you all remain at the jacks and work with a will. Father will continue to apply the electricity in unison with your efforts!" cried Frank, Jr.

Then leaving his collaborators he bounded into the carriage.

The savages had ignited torches, and brandishing those fire brands, which blazed through the Stygian gloom like a hundred flashing meteors, they were advancing toward the carriage.

The torch lights enabled Frank, Jr., to calculate nicely the speed of their approach, and he knew the exact distance from the carriage to the line of dynamite cartridges. About this point he had been very particular, and Barney and Pomp had carefully measured the distance he told them to go by pacing it, allowing three feet for a pace, which is about the average.

Frank could measure distances very accurately by the eye, and he was soon sure the approaching savages were pretty near the long line of explosives set on the pampas by Barney.

"Now for it. The time has arrived to put the final touch to my experiment," muttered Frank. As he spoke he felt the carriage move backward a number of feet, and he was assured that it and the Electric Horse would soon be on solid ground if the Indians could only be held in check.

It was a most thrilling moment, and every nerve in the young inventor's frame was tense with the strain of the exciting situation.

He sprang to the battery and quickly connected the wires with it which communicated with the line of cartridges in front of the savages.

The electric fluid flashed along the wire with a speed which surpasses all other elements known to man.

It reached the dynamite cartridges.

Along the line it darted, and a series of terrific explosions, succeeding each other so rapidly as to be almost simultaneous, occurred.

The fire flashed high in a long line of living flame, cutting the darkness like a number of swords of fire.

The metal casings of the cartridges were shattered into hundreds of deadly missiles, and hurled with the velocity of rifle bullets among the natives.

Frank had accurately judged their proximity to the explosives when he accomplished the electrical discharge.

Wild yells, shrieks, groans, appalling cries rent the air, and the natives retreated.

They believed there was a concealed battery planted on the pampas just before them, which they could not pass.

Meanwhile the Electric Horse and carriage continued to move backward, and there was no cessation in the efforts that were being made to back the same onto the solid ground.

"Whoop! Arrah! that was nate and illigant intirely. It's a warrum reception yez gave 'em. Will the blackguards call again widout an invite, I dunno?" cried Barney.

"You'se keep yah mouff shet an' doan' luff dis coon have all de liftn' to do, nigger," said Pomp, as Barney let up lifting a trifle.

"Nagur! Do yez call me a nagur? Hev' I lved to hear the loike. Wait, bedad, until we are out av this scrape. As a favor, though, Oi'll let yez tell me now what word yez want sint to yer friends," roared Barney.

But now the savages were making a detour, and it was evident they meant to attack the carriage from the opposite side.

"Lively, all! Keep the carriage moving backward!" shouted Frank, Jr.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE JOURNEY RESUMED—SIGNAL SMOKE.

The torches carried by the natives yet enabled Frank, Jr., to tell the course they were taking.

He was not alarmed when he saw that they were making a detour. The young inventor's admirable forethought had guarded against the very plan of attack which the natives now contemplated.

The dynamite cartridges placed in a line at a distance from the carriage, on the side opposite that whence the last attack had just been made, Frank, Jr., hoped would prove as effective as those just discharged.

While the savages made their detour to get to the opposite side of the vehicle, the work of

lifting and backing the Electric Horse and carriage progressed steadily.

The end of the burrow would soon be reached now if the second line of cartridges served as well as the first had done.

Frank kept a close watch on the savages, so as to be able to properly time the discharge of the second line of cartridges, and render it as destructive to the enemy as possible.

The enraged Indians proceeded swiftly, and were soon charging upon the Electric carriage from the opposite side.

They did not anticipate another such a reception as had just been accorded them, their reckless onrush proclaimed.

Frank waited again until he was sure they were close upon the line of cartridges, and then he connected the wire running to them with the battery.

Another explosion which fully equaled the first immediately took place.

The result in this instance too was much the same.

The savages were hurled back in confusion, and while their deafening yells rang over the pampas once more the Electric Horse and carriage began to run swiftly backward.

A wild, thrilling shout of intense joy burst from the throats of the entire party.

"Hurrah! Hurrah! We are clear of the burrow!" cried Frank, Jr.

Such was the fact.

Those outside of the vehicle were quickly taken on board, and they brought the wagon-jacks which had been of so much service with them. The wires by means of which the cartridges had been exploded were cast off. The electric lights were turned on, and with bright illuminations from the eyes of the giant steed, and the great globe on the top of the carriage, it sped swiftly away skirting along the confines of the burrow.

The electric light enabled the engineer to steer clear of the burrow now that he was warned of its proximity.

The yells of the disappointed savages grew fainter and fainter until they died away in the distance, and the enemy was left far behind.

"Do these burrows usually extend far?" asked Frank, Jr., of Corrajo.

"No. We shall soon reach the end of it, and then we can resume our direct course," he answered.

Presently Barney was seen to throw off his coat and hat.

"So it was a nagur yez was aftter callin' me. Now, bedad, I'll bate the head of yez!" he cried, dancing about before Pomp.

The darky did not seem to be even just a little bit afraid.

There was a broad grin on his good-natured countenance.

"Hole on dar, Barney! Keep yer close on an' I'll prove to yer dat you is a nigger!" he cried.

"I'm a nigger, ain't I?" he went on quickly.

"Yis, begob!"

"Well, I ain't got no book learnin', an' I works fo' Mars Frank, don't I?"

"Yis."

"You ain't got no book learnin' an' you works fo' Mars Frank, too."

"That's so."

"Well, den, you'se jist the same as I is, an' I'se a nigger, so you'se a nigger, too. De only difference am, I'se a brack nigger an' you'se a white nigger."

Barney looked perplexed.

"Bedad, that sounds loike philosophy, an' it's mesel as used to philosophize and so forth. But hold on! there's something wrong wid the theory. Begob, I have it, Oi'm an Irishman, long life to me, an' you're not, so that lits me out, an' be the powers, yez must foight!"

"Dat's all right, my brains feel like da' wanted shakin' up, 'case I hasn't done nuffin' in de buttin' line lately," retorted Pomp, getting ready for action.

"Brains!" exclaimed Barney, disdainfully, "where did yez get thim?"

Then he made a rush at Pomp, but Frank, Jr., who had enjoyed the scene with the others now thought it time to interfere.

He caught Barney by the shoulder and gave him a whirl that sent him away from Pomp, as he said sternly:

"There'll be no fighting. Now drop it."

Barney and Pomp knew better than to disobey Frank, Jr., when he took that tone, and so the affair ended.

The burrow was passed presently, and a direct course was resumed.

The electric vehicle was kept in motion all night, and when day dawned a halt was made and breakfast prepared.

While this was being done Pomp all at once cried out:

"Look dar! What am dat comin'?"

As he spoke the darky pointed.

The others glanced in the direction he indicated, and they saw one of the most hideous animals they had ever beheld.

It was about eight feet long, and its body was covered with coarse, shaggy hair, while its black and bushy tail was a sight of itself, it was so disproportionately large.

The head was long, tapering to a point, and the claws on its feet looked powerful enough to tear up the small trees for which it was making.

"What is it, sure?" asked Barney, getting his rifle.

"A tamaror," answered Corrajo.

"But the English name is 'ant-bear,'" said Dr. Vaneyke.

As he spoke the bear disappeared in the bushes.

Barney, rifle in hand, rushed toward the cover and vanished among the bushes. But he was hardly out of sight when he was heard to utter a terrified yell.

"What trouble has Barney blundered into now?" said Frank, Jr., and he and Corrajo hastened to the thicket.

They soon found out what had happened, for in the bushes they found the Irishman floundering about in a deep, square pit, and vainly trying to get out.

"Be me soul, I think I hev dropped into one of the nagur's cellars. Lind me a hand, will yez?" he cried.

Corrajo threw him the end of his lasso, and he was quickly drawn out.

But the ant-bear had made good his escape.

"The pit into which Barney fell is a tapir trap, and so I think there must be a native town near, and water cannot be as far away as the Amazon," said Corrajo.

"We are still in the territory of the Ticunas, the tribe we had the battles with," he added.

"What's that away off yonder in the direction whence we came?" asked Frank, pointing.

A column of dense black smoke was seen arising from the pampas.

Corrajo started as he saw it, and he said:

"That is a signal smoke. By such means the natives communicate with each other at long distances. See, there comes another column of smoke, and now another. Three—ah, I understand that signal. It means 'an enemy is near.' Our foes are warning their tribe ahead of us of our presence. We must continue our advance without delay."

The trio ran back to the electric carriage. Breakfast was hastily eaten, and then the journey was resumed.

The Electric Horse and carriage had just passed through a thicket, when its further progress was blocked in a way that surprised the explorers.

CHAPTER XXII.

SURPRISED BY TICUNAS PRIESTS AT THE SCAFFOLD-TOMBS.

"The ingarape!" exclaimed Corrajo, as the Electric Horse was brought to a halt when it emerged from the thicket, and the explorers saw before them a sheet of stagnant, or almost stagnant water, the surface of which was strewn with green plants—small floating clumps of vegetation, and other debris.

"It looks like a stagnant lake. Why ingarape?" asked Frank, Jr.

"Ingarape is the local term. It means a bayou or channel setting back from a river," explained Dr. Vaneyke.

"And does this water derive its source from the greatest river in the world—the Amazon?"

"Undoubtedly. These channels sometimes extend for miles. But, though in some respects you are quite right in saying this is the greatest of rivers, there is another river that is more extended."

"What river is that?"

"The Nile, of course."

"Certainly," said Mr. Reade, Sr. "But to interrupt your discussion. Which way now? Is there any prospect of passing around this obstruction, or must it be crossed?"

"The mass of vegetation accumulated on the surface of the bayou or ingarape seems to suggest that we are near its end," replied the doctor.

"Am I right, Corrajo?" he added.

"Yes, quite so. We should go southward, and my word for it, we shall soon pass the ingarape," replied the gaucho, in a positive tone.

"Bedad, there's another smoke yonder!" cried Barney, and he pointed to the southwest.

"So there is! I'll take a look through the telescope," said Frank, Jr., and he suited the action to the words.

"The Ticunas are answering the signals of their brethren whom we have left behind," replied Corrajo.

"Fat took the army av nagurs, who hev

caused us so many ructions, so far from home?" asked Barney.

"The native tribes are frequently at war with each other. No doubt the Ticunas army we encountered are returning from an expedition against the Iquitos tribe to the northward, who are their hereditary enemies," explained the gaúcho.

"Begob, an' it's a pity the hathen don't kill each other off so white min kin settle the country."

"They have almost done so, aided by foreign adventurers in some parts of Brazil. The river country of the Tunatins is almost depopulated. Here we find the law of the survival of the fittest exemplified, and the case is much the same in other lands. Before the Anglo-Saxon race savage tribes always pass away," said the doctor.

"Hello! I make out a large Indian village away off yonder whence the last smoke comes!" said Frank, Jr.

"No doubt it is the head town of the Ticunas. It should be found somewhere in this neighborhood, I think," answered Corrajo.

"We must keep clear of it!"

"Yes. The smoke signal has warned the populace, and they will be on the lookout. We should make a wide detour, and pass around the village."

Frank, Jr., now relieved his father as engineer, and the course of the Electric Horse was altered.

The explorers proceeded along the bank of the ingarape in a southerly course. The banks of the estuary gradually became wooded, and at a short distance Corrajo made a discovery.

He announced what he had seen after taking a look through Frank, Jr.'s telescope, saying:

"We are approaching the sacred grounds of the Ticunas."

When the electric vehicle had proceeded further all saw among the trees, near the bank of the bayou, a singular collection of scaffolds.

"Is it startin' to build houses the hathens are after doin'?" asked Barney.

"No. Those scaffolds are the tombs of the Ticunas' dead," said Corrajo.

Drawing nearer, the party saw that upon the scaffolds there were hundreds of dead natives in all stages of decay, or shriveled and desiccated by the dry winds until they resembled Egyptian mummies.

"The spot is hallowed in the hearts of the Indians, and so they call the site of the scaffold-tombs sacred ground," said the doctor, and taking up the telescope, he directed a long and searching glance at the singular cemetery.

The powerful glass revealed something to the doctor which the others had not seen.

"I discern a flat stone set on end under the middle scaffold, and I think it is covered with tracings. At one time in the years gone by the Franciscan monks visited the Ticunas as missionaries. Who knows, perhaps yonder inscription may give me a clew to the meaning of the cipher on the ancient cube," said the doctor.

Every member of the party was interested at once.

"I must have a close look at the inscription," the doctor continued.

"Then we will run up to the scaffold," said Frank, Jr.

"By no means. The electric conveyance might be seen from the village. No, I'll go on foot, while you remain here. Corrajo will accompany me."

The bamboo and palm huts of the Ticunas tribe composing the adjacent village could now be quite plainly discerned through the intervening trees.

"No, no, doctor," said Corrajo, anxiously. "Do not visit the sacred ground. The Ticunas always visit the penalty of death on any one who ventures to intrude there. Should we be discovered we may be captured."

"But the village is at such a distance that we may creep up unseen."

"Possibly. But the priests of the tribe almost always watch the tombs. It is a part of their duty."

"Well," said the doctor, carefully glancing about through the telescope, "I do not see a living being about the scaffolds. No, there is certainly no one there. I must examine the inscriptions on the rock."

Corrajo shook his head doubtfully, but he knew it would be of little use to argue the matter further, and so he said:

"I'll not refuse to go with you, but remember you are warned."

Frank, Jr., and Mr. Reade, Sr., tried to dissuade the old naturalist, but in vain, and so he and Corrajo armed themselves and set out for the scaffold-tombs.

For a wonder, neither Barney nor Pomp seemed anxious to go along.

"Bedad, I've no wish to mate dead nagurs

mesel," said Barney, who was very superstitious.

Pomp said nothing, but he glanced about as though he expected to see a ghost of some dead savage at any moment.

Corrajo and the doctor crept toward the "sacred ground," concealing their advance as well as possible under the pampas grass.

Frank Reade, Jr., ascended to the deck of the carriage, and watched them for a long time. Finally, through the aid of the telescope, he saw them among the scaffolds.

But suddenly he made another and most startling discovery.

Creeping up toward the scaffold-tombs he saw a dozen Indians, clad in strange, fantastic robes. They were of robust frame, of great height, with long hair, their noses pierced, and with ears elongated almost to their shoulders, by the weight of their ornaments.

"The priests of the Ticunas, I'll be bound! The swarthy rascals have discovered the doctor and Corrajo, and they mean to take them by surprise," said Frank, Jr., mentally.

The stealthy manner of the strangely-attired savages convinced the young inventor of their hostile intentions at a glance.

He descended into the interior of the vehicle, and communicated his discovery to the others, while he hastily put on his suit of mail, which he had discarded after using it last.

"We will run the Electric Horse up to the rescue!" said Mr. Reade.

"No. The savages will discover us then before we can assist our friends, and hasten their capture. By running bent double through the tall grass I can reach the scaffolds almost as soon as the Ticunas priests; unseen, I hope, and Barney shall go with me. Put on father's suit of mail, Barney. You have been so anxious for a hand to hand fight, that I'll give you an opportunity to enjoy yourself," said Frank, Jr.

Then while Barney slipped on the suit of mail Frank produced a pair of steel-plated gauntlet gloves. On his back, between the shoulders, he strapped a small knapsack and then drew on the steel-gloves and connected them with the knapsack by means of flexible wires, jointed every few inches and insulated by rubber tubes, which ran over his shoulders and down his arms.

These preparations were completed in a moment, and then Frank and Barney seized their arms and slipped out of the carriage.

Barney didn't like to make any objection, though he was averse to going near dead men, and the prospect of a real hand to hand "ruction" went far to overcome his superstitions.

Meanwhile, without seeing any one, the doctor and Corrajo reached the stone which the former had discovered, and, very much to his delight, he found it covered with cipher-writing.

The old naturalist produced a note-book and pencil, and hastily copied the inscription.

While he was thus engaged the band of native priests came up. They were undiscovered until with unearthly yells they suddenly leaped erect out of the tall grass and rushed at the doctor and the gaúcho from all sides.

The whites discharged their weapons and made a heroic fight. But hemmed in as they were by the enemy, who seemed determined to capture them alive, it seemed that they were doomed. To add to their alarm, they heard the yells of hundreds of natives in the neighboring village, and they knew they were coming to reinforce the priests.

"Merci! We shall be taken, and these savages are cannibals!" cried Corrajo.

CHAPTER XXIII.

FRANK, JR., EXPERIMENTS WITH HIS ELECTRIC GAUNTLETS.

CONTRARY to Frank, Jr.'s supposition the Ticunas priests had advanced more rapidly than he and Barney, and thus it was that they made their attack upon Corrajo and his old master before the young inventor and his companion came up.

As Frank and Barney crept through the bushes and tall grass the latter asked:

"Fat invitation are yez after tryin' now? Bedad, yez hev somethin' in pickle for the nagurs, I know."

"Yes, I mean to shake hands with some of them, Barney."

"It isn't tryin' to make friends with them yez are after thinkin'! Bedad, ye promised we'd hev a bit av' a ruction," replied Barney, anxiously.

"No. The savages won't want to shake hands with me more than once, my greeting will be rather too forcible, I'm thinking."

"Be gob, it's the gloves as contain the secret."

"Yes. These are my electric gauntlets."

"An' where does the electricity come from?"

"From a small but powerful portable battery in the knapsack on my back."

"It's a janus yez are intirely, from the crown av yer head till the soul av yer feet!" exclaimed Barney, in admiration.

They could not see the Ticunas priests now, and as they drew near the scaffold-tombs the first warning they received that the savages had reached them was when they sprang upon their friends, uttering their fierce yells.

"Now for it, Barney!" said Frank, Jr.

They quickened their pace, and just as Corrajo made the despairing remark, which concluded the preceding chapter, the young inventor and the Irishman fell upon the enemy.

"Whoop!" yelled Barney, as he and Frank, Jr., charged forward side by side.

Never did sound more welcome fall upon human ears than the shout of the brave fellow, heard by Corrajo and the old doctor, for it told them assistance was at hand.

As Frank and Barney suddenly appeared before the surprised natives, the sunlight illuminated their polished suits of mail, and reflected a thousand brilliant lights, making the men in armor look as though they were incased in suits of flame.

Like supernatural beings they seemed to the Ticunas priests, who fell back for a moment in awe, and stricken with superstitious fears.

Frank and Barney reached Corrajo and the doctor, and when the natives saw how the latter welcomed them they concluded they were merely men, and made another onset as the four friends started to retreat.

Then a desperate hand-to-hand battle began.

For once Barney found himself in the midst of a ruction after his own heart, and, clubbing his gun, as though it was a "sprig of a shillalah," he laid about him lustily, hitting a native's head wherever he saw one.

"Arrah! Shades of Donnybrook! Whoop! Bedad, the nagurs can't stand forninst the shick. The Irishman's shamrock forever!" Barney shouted and he leaped about, showering blows in every direction.

The bold, reckless Irishman was a host in himself, but it remained for our young hero of a hundred adventures in almost every land, the great and only Frank Reade, Jr., to turn the tide of battle against the enemy by means of the electric gloves which he had himself invented, and which were a great improvement on anything of the kind previously originated by anybody.

A score of natives from the village had now come up.

Frank had been leaping about among the savages seizing one whenever he could, all the time since his advent among them.

Every time Frank, Jr., seized a native, the electric gloves gave him a powerful shock, something like a stroke of lightning, though not so severe of course.

Frank keeled the natives over in every direction, and when the reinforcements came up, led by a giant chief, Frank, Jr., advanced toward him, holding out his hand. Hand-shaking is a custom among the Ticunas, and the big chief thought Frank wanted to make friends, seeing he was in a tight place. The crafty native saw that Frank, Jr., was rather slightly built, and he counted on seizing his extended hand in seeming friendship, with a grip of iron, and then jerk the young inventor off his feet, and thus make him a prisoner.

In a moment the young genius grasped the hand of the hurculean chief in his steel gauntlet.

Then, with a yell of pain, the huge fellow sprang up, as though hurled into the air by some invisible power, and fell in a heap, shocked into insensibility.

Frank leaped over the fallen Ticunas, and dashed among his followers, shocking them right and left with every touch of the magical gloves.

Meanwhile, through a telescope, Mr. Reade, Sr., had witnessed the conflict in progress at the scaffold-tombs, and becoming alarmed when he saw the reinforcements coming from the Indian village, he hastened to get the Electric Horse and carriage in motion, and directed its course straight toward the scaffolds.

But when the Electric Horse came up, drawing the attached carriage, with swift, majestic strides, Frank, through the irresistible power of electricity, had put the natives to flight.

The party boarded the vehicle at once, and turning on a good supply of the motive power, Mr. Reade, Sr., caused the whole machine to move off swiftly.

"Well, doctor, what about the inscription on the rock?" asked Frank, Jr., as soon as he regained his breath after his recent exertions.

"I am sure it was made by the Franciscan missionaries, for I find several of the same strange characters on the rock that are inscribed

on the cipher-cube. The character standing for the Spanish of *sacred* occurs, and of course I am not sure as to the meaning of the others," replied the doctor.

Then he handed the note-book, in which he had copied the cryptogram from the rocks, to Frank, Jr., who glanced at it with interest.

"How did you first make out the words you have found on the cipher-cube? I have wondered what your clew was?" the young inventor asked presently.

"Well, you see, in Peru, at the entrance of an old road, I found, during my last visit to that country, an inscription, with a hand pointing as though the secret writing was intended as a sign board.

The natives said the ancient Franciscans had made the writing, and upon interviewing an old monk of the Franciscan order, who lives in the monastery near Lima, I learned from him that the inscription on the old road was really in the form of secret writing, invented by his order when the country was in a state of turmoil, and during the period of strife for supremacy between the Jesuits and Franciscans, Padre Jomadez was sure of the origin of the writing, though the secret key, by which it could be read, had perished with the ancient Franciscans of the Cordilleras, who were massacred by the Gran-Chaco tribes.

I investigated further, and learned that the old road, at the entrance of which the cipher sign-board was inscribed, led to a "sacred" temple of stone, long since fallen into ruin, situated at the foot of a lofty peak of the Andes, called the "finger" mountain, and that the old highway was once a "gold" road, over which precious ore from the now exhausted mines of the Upper Peruvian range was transported on the backs of the tame llamas and mules in the olden times.

Then I observed that the cipher signboard was composed of eleven characters, and I asked myself what the sign would naturally read, and substituted a word for each sign, thus:

"Old gold road, leading to sacred temple of finger mountain."

I am sure I hit upon the right translation, for on the old ruined temple I found the inscription placed there by the Franciscans. It was composed of two signs, which were those that from the old signboard I had decided meant sacred and temple. So I read the inscription, "Sacred temple." Everything seemed to carry out my theory, and my copy of the sign on the old gold road is my clew to the secret writing on the cube. Do I make my reasoning clear?" asked the doctor, in conclusion.

"Entirely so. I think you have correctly translated the cipher on the old gold road," said Frank.

But just then Corrajo called his attention to a large body of natives who had marched across the pampas from their village under cover of the wooded banks of the bayou, and now seemed determined to cut off the advance of the Electric Horse.

"The pampas is solid and clear. We can make good time. What do you say, father? Shall we try to run right through yonder band? I will put on the new wheel appliance if you approve of my idea," said Frank, Jr.

"All right. I'm anxious to reach the Purus river and the site of the arrow drawn on the map of the cipher cube," assented Mr. Reade, Sr.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A TRIUMPH FOR THE SAVAGES.

The Electric Horse was slowed up, and Frank, Jr., opened the seemingly inexhaustible locker under the floor, and, assisted by Barney and Pomp, he lifted out four odd-looking blades about four feet long, six inches broad at the base, two-edged, of tempered steel, and running to a sword-point. The wide ends of the great two-edged blades terminated in a hollow metal tube ground with a screw-thread inside.

"Bedad, sur, but thim is ugly-lookin' cutters, Masther Frank. An' fot is it yez mane to do wid 'em?" asked Barney.

The others, excepting Mr. Reade, Sr., watched the young inventor with great interest, and they wondered just how the prince of inventors meant to utilize the great knives against the enemy.

"Your curiosity will be gratified very shortly, Barney," said Frank, Jr.

At a signal Mr. Reade, Sr., now drew back the main lever, and brought the Electric Horse slowly to a stand-still.

Then the strange blades were lifted out of the vehicle, and Frank, Jr., proceeded to screw one of the blades onto each of the four axle hubs, which projected a few inches beyond the wheels, and were grooved with a screw thread for the reception of the hollow handles of the blades.

"Admirable!" exclaimed Dr. Vaneyke. "We

can now cut our way through the savages literally."

"Yes. While we are moving through the ranks of the enemy the blades will cut down all who come within our reach," said Frank, Jr.

"And prevent the savages getting near enough to board us as long as we move swiftly," said Mr. Reade, Sr.

"Golly! Dis am jis like de mowin' machines out West at home. I'se gwine fo' to rig up a wagon wid blades like dat to cut de big corn-field on de Pomp plantation when I gits home," said Pomp.

As soon as the blades were all firmly screwed fast to the carriage axles Frank, Jr., and his assistants re-entered the vehicle.

Then it was started forward once more, and a course taken leading straight toward the savages from the Tiennas village, who had now spread out across the pampas, and were waiting the coming of the wonderful conveyance and the great Electric Horse, in order to dispute its progress.

Steadily the speed of the remarkable invention was increased as it approached the enemy.

The electricity was applied to the great bell, and, for the first time, its ringing chime was heard on that portion of the Brazilian continent.

The great, polished blades extended out from each axle like huge swords grasped by giant hands, and the sunlight flashed from their broad surfaces with dazzling brightness.

"I think I know where you got your idea for the axle blades, Frank," said the old doctor, with a cunning smile, presently.

"Do you? Well, tell me, and if you are right I'll acknowledge it," replied Frank, Jr.

"I think the idea may have been suggested to you by the drawings of ancient battle chariots to be found in foreign histories," said the doctor.

"You are right. That's just where I got the idea, doctor," answered Frank, Jr.

"As this is my first experiment with the sword-blades, I am quite anxious to see how they will answer the purpose they are intended to serve," he added.

A few moments later the great metal horse, followed by the attached vehicle, dashed right in among the massed savages.

Showers of arrows were discharged by the enemy, and a rush was made at the Electric Horse and carriage.

But the great blades swept away the savages on both sides, and the great horse overthrew them as though they were wooden soldiers set up to be demolished.

The Winchester electric battery was brought into use, and a moment after it was once discharged on both sides the electric conveyance passed the enemy.

Sending back exultant shouts at the discomfited and thoroughly demoralized enemy, the explorers dashed away on the right course, drawn by the steel of lightning power, and the broad, unobstructed pampas stretched away before them like a vast unending sea of emerald billows, as the gentle breeze undulated the grass in flowing waves.

That day a fine advance was made. No more savages were seen, and at night a camp fire was kindled. Corrajo shot a fine roebuck and an excellent supper was made.

It was deemed advisable that a guard should be kept that night, although there seemed to be no enemy in sight, and Corrajo determined to serve the first watch.

Frank, Jr., was to succeed him.

Not far distant from the camp a narrow tributary of the Amazon wound its way through the pampas, and its banks were thickly wooded.

Corrajo had reconnoitered the woods and he assured his friends that there was no concealed enemy in the vicinity.

At an early hour all except Corrajo retired to the interior of the vehicle, and soon fell asleep.

The gaucho reclined upon his poncho or blanket on the top of the carriage, and he had agreed to awaken Frank, Jr., at midnight.

But after having slept some hours Frank, Jr., chanced to awaken of his own volition, although no sound had aroused him.

Looking at his watch by the light of the brilliant moon, which streamed through the perforated sides of the carriage, the young man saw that it was after midnight.

"I wonder why Corrajo has not awakened me," he thought.

Then he ascended to the carriage deck, but Corrajo was not there. Frank, Jr., glanced about in every direction, but he saw nothing of the gaucho, and he became very much perturbed.

He noted that Corrajo's rifle was missing, and thinking perhaps he had sighted some prowling animal, and gone into the adjacent wood beside the stream further on, he shouted the gaucho's name.

Frank's voice awakened all the inmates of the carriage, but the gaucho answered not.

The mysterious absence of the Brazilian engendered grave misgivings in the minds of all but in the thought that he might return soon, and that he was better able to take care of himself alone on the pampas than any other member of the party, they found ground for hopes with which they strove to allay their anxiety.

But the night passed, and Corrajo did not return with the dawn of the new day.

Then Frank, Jr., determined to delay no longer, but to immediately institute a search for the missing man.

Accompanied by Barney and Pomp, and leaving Mr. Reade, Sr., and the doctor in charge of the Electric Horse, the young inventor sought for the gaucho's trail. Frank, Jr., and Barney wore the suits of mail.

Upon the pampas it could not be found, for the turf left no tell-tale imprint. Frank, Jr., proceeded to the wood, and with his two companions scouted along its confines.

The earth was almost nude of vegetation there and quite yielding. Very much to their delight, the searchers discovered the footprints of Corrajo's boots, and his trail, which they at once followed, led straight into the woods.

Meanwhile, after the departure of Frank and his companions, the doctor, who was scanning the pampas through the telescope, sighted a line of moving objects afar off, and after a time he made them out to be horsemen.

He communicated his discovery to the old inventor, and both he and the latter experienced considerable uneasiness.

But presently the horseman passed out of sight, and the two old gentlemen breathed easier again. But the hours went by, and Frank, Jr., and his comrades did not return. Noon came and passed. The shades of night fell, and still the absent ones appeared not.

Frank, Jr.'s father and the doctor were now thoroughly alarmed, and they strained their eyes in the effort to pierce the gathering gloom, hoping to see the welcome sight of the returning absentees.

But they did not see them, and they failed to discover a number of dark human forms which came crawling, serpent-like, through the tall grass in the fading light from the cover of the woods.

Suddenly a dozen hideous Amazon savages sprang up out of the grass, uttering exultant yells. A bola ball struck Mr. Reade, Sr., and felled him senseless to the deck. Then, before the doctor could reach his gun, the Indians swarmed into and upon the carriage.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE SAVAGES COMPEL MR. READE, SR., TO RUN THE ELECTRIC HORSE.

The savages had accomplished a complete surprise, and at last they had captured the Electric Horse. While he lay insensible from the blow of the bolas ball, with which he had been stricken down, Mr. Reade, Sr., was bound securely, hand and foot.

Meanwhile Dr. Vaneyke was also bound in a like manner, while the spears of the natives were leveled at his breast, threatening him with instant death if he resisted.

The captors of the Electric Horse were Ticunas Indians of the same tribe to which belonged the old warrior who had recognized the ancient cipher-cube.

The signal smokes had warned them as well as the natives of the village of the "sacred ground" of the approach of an enemy. They were out on a hunting expedition on the banks of the tributary of the Amazon when they discovered the Electric Horse, while themselves sheltered from sight in the wood that fringed the water-course.

The savages jabbered away among themselves, and proceeded to ransack the carriage after securing the prisoners.

Fortunately, however, they failed to discover or open the door in the bottom of the vehicle which communicated with the locker containing all the explorers' scientific appliances and supplies.

The savages were amazed and filled with wonder at everything they saw. They clambered upon the back of the great metal horse and pounded him with their spears, as though expecting to thus drive him forward. They peered into his great glass eyes, and gave oral expression to their astonishment in their own guttural tongue.

Dr. Vaneyke watched his hideous captors, consumed by dread and despairing fears. He now thought Corrajo and the devoted trio who had gone in search of him must have fallen into the hands of the enemy, and he believed that all was lost.

There were tears of sympathy and regret in his eyes, and his features expressed his consuming grief as he looked upon the upturned face of Mr. Reade, Sr., as the great American inventor lay motionless, the moonlight falling upon his upturned face. He believed that it was the dread white shadow that rested there and that the noble soul that had animated the wonderful brain of the man of rare genius had forever departed from its tenement of clay.

It was a sad and bitter hour for the good old doctor, and the contemplation of his own probable fate made him shudder while he lay helpless and entirely at the mercy of those cruel and vindictive Amazon savages.

No ray of hope shed the faintest light upon the blackness of the despair that fell upon the captive's spirits. The direful circumstances entirely overcast the pole star of despondency, *Hope!*

But the Indians seemed to be aware that the Electric Horse and carriage possessed the power of motion, and they strove to start it in every way that suggested itself to their untutored minds.

Vain, however, was every attempt, although they even seized the great main lever, and repeatedly worked it backward and forward.

As the old doctor witnessed this attempt, he feared the savages would accomplish their purpose, and he wondered why the machinery did not start.

But presently he recollected, as was the fact, that before he slept the preceding night Mr. Reade, Sr., had detached the lever at the bottom in order to oil the pivot on which it turned, and he correctly surmised that he had not again secured it to the brake regulating the supply of electricity from the battery.

This was the true explanation, and thus but for an accidental oversight the savages might have started the great invention, and run it to destruction.

When the savages had failed in every attempt to impart motion to the Electric Horse, they held a consultation among themselves, and seemed to engage in an animated discussion of the situation.

The doctor was now consumed with alarmed apprehension lest they might seek to wreck and demolish the wonderful invention in their rage and impatience, which was clearly betokened in their manner.

But the natives were cunning fellows, for all their ignorance and stupid looks.

While they were consulting, Mr. Reade, Sr., uttered a groan, and the doctor's heart leaped joyfully, as he then knew his old friend was not dead.

The evidences of returning consciousness, of which Mr. Reade's groan was the first proof, continued to manifest themselves, and finally the color stole reluctantly back to his livid face, and the tide of life once more surged back to his heart, and awakened the pulsations of resuscitation throughout his whole frame. He opened his eyes and presently tried to arise, only then to discover that he was a bound captive.

"Heaven be praised that your life is preserved!" said the old doctor, fervently.

Then Mr. Reade, Sr., realized what had occurred, and the terrible nature of the catastrophe dawned upon him clearly.

"We are lost—doomed to end our careers at last, it seems, doctor," groaned the old inventor. The aged naturalist bowed his head in assent, for he could utter no word of hope.

Just then the savages discovered that Mr. Reade, Sr., had revived, and they clambered up to the deck upon which he and the doctor lay, and, untying his hands, placed him upon his feet.

"What are they about to do?" the doctor asked himself.

The question was soon answered in a manner that told the savages had considered the situation to some purpose.

By means of a variety of signs, which, in their entirety, constituted a most expressive and unmistakable pantomime, the natives made Mr. Reade understand that he must start the Electric Horse, or they would kill him then and there.

At first the old inventor pretended he did not comprehend what was required of him, but this deception only served to further infuriate his captors without deceiving them.

A dozen spears were leveled at the intrepid old inventor, and realizing that to further trifle would be to hasten the doom which he regarded as finally inevitable, he yielded.

The doctor, witnessing the peril of his resolute friend, urged him to obey, saying:

"We can gain nothing by your further delay, while even in this dire extremity time is precious, and life as well. We must not hasten our fates. The chapter of accidents may not be ended even yet."

So, as the untoward circumstances did not admit of his doing otherwise, much as it was against his will, Mr. Reade, Sr., finally reluctantly obeyed the behest of the savages, and put the horse in motion.

By means of signs the Indians made the inventor comprehend that he must go back in the direction of the Ticunas' village, near which the scaffold-tombs were located.

Then Mr. Reade, Sr., in turn resorted to signs, and made his captors understand that it was necessary for him to have the doctor's assistance, and they unbound the old naturalist, and he descended to the rear brake, followed by a couple of savages, who stood over him while he worked the rear axle as Mr. Reade, Sr., in the manner which has already been clearly described heretofore, turned the horse and carriage.

All the savages save those who guarded the doctor remained on "deck," and closely watched Mr. Reade, Sr., in evident distrust.

And so the enforced journey, which the captives believed would end in death for them when their destination was reached, was begun.

But, meanwhile, what of Frank, Jr., Barney and Pomp, who had been absent all day?

They followed the trail of Corrajo along through the woods, and soon convinced themselves, from the peculiarities about the gaucho's trail, that he had been "still stalking" the roebuck, or pampas antelope, as they discovered the tracks of those animals, and they presumed that having discovered the game from the top of the carriage, Corrajo had sought to secure one for breakfast without disturbing them.

But the gaucho had followed the slot of the game for a long distance through the narrow strip of timber along the river.

Finally our friends came to a point where a discovery was made which filled them with the gravest fears. They found the tracks of a band of savages.

Still further on they saw, where the earth was soft and left impressions at every step they took, that there was every evidence that an encounter had taken place there between the gaucho and the enemy.

The earth was trampled, the bushes broken, and a fragment of Corrajo's poucho was found adhering to a thorny plant.

"Ah, Corrajo has been captured, but he was not taken without a desperate fight," said Frank, Jr.

"Golly, dat's too bad! Corrajo saved Barney an' dischile from de tiger. We ain't gwine back widout him, is we, Irish?" said Pomp.

"No, be bad. We'll foller up the nagurs and bate the heads av thim. Lead us on, Masther Frank, an' it's an illigant bit av a shindy we'll give the hathen!" replied Barney.

"Corrajo must be rescued, and I think only immediate pursuit can avail now. So we will proceed. But we must resort to a stratagem to get our friend out of his captors' clutches when we overtake them," said Frank, Jr.

"Sure, an' you an' I hev our suits of mail on," said Barney.

This was true, but Pomp was without armor, of course, as there were only two mail suits in the possession of the inventors.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE CAPTURE OF FRANK, JR., BARNEY AND POMP.

FRANK, JR., and his two comrades continued steadily onward, and they experienced little difficulty in following the trail of Corrajo's captors, for it was quite plain, the natives having made no attempt to cover their tracks.

But the devoted trio were led much further away from the Electric Horse than they had anticipated, for the natives had traveled very rapidly.

It was midday when, as they were still traversing the woods, a startling and surprising incident occurred.

Suddenly Barney and Pomp, who just then chanced to be a little in advance of Frank, Jr., vanished from his sight with a crash as though the earth under their feet had opened and swallowed them up.

"Another tapir trap! They have stumbled into a pit dug by the natives to capture the tapir," exclaimed the young man.

He hastened forward, and at once discovered that his explanation of the accident was the true one.

Frank paused upon the brink of a deep square pit, which had been cunningly covered with sticks and leaves, like the one from which Barney had been previously rescued when he went in pursuit of the Antbear.

At the bottom of the tapir-pit Barney and Pomp were struggling in vain attempts to get out.

"Lind us a hand, Masther Frank. Sure an'

it's another one of the haythen's traps that has coteched us this toime," said Barney.

"All right, I'll help you out," replied Frank, Jr. "I'll—"

He was about to speak further, but his utterance was strangled in his throat. A lasso deftly cast by a native, who was crouching in the forks of a tree above his head and concealed by the foliage, settled about his neck, and he was jerked backward upon the ground.

Then, as if Frank, Jr.'s fall was a preconcerted signal for which they had waited, a score of savages sprang up from among the thickly-growing bushes which abounded around the tapir-trap, and the young adventurer comprehended that he and his friends were the victims of an ambush planned for them by the crafty Indians.

Uttering the fierce exultant cries which the inventors had heard so often in the wilds of the Amazon, the savages secured Frank, Jr., and then they threw their lassos down into the pit and signed for Barney and Pomp to ascend.

The Irishman and the darky availed themselves of the assistance of the lassos and were quickly out of the pit.

"Whoop!" yelled Barney, the moment he found himself on solid footing again. "It's takin' av gintlemen foul yez are afther doin', ye blackguards! Be gob, Pomp, give thim the best yez have! Butt the hathen out av' toime while I lay thim out wid me sthick!"

The Irish hero snatched up his rifle which he had dropped on the edge of the pit as he fell into it, and after shooting down the nearest Indian he clubbed the weapon and began a furious assault upon the savages, reckless of all consequences, and taking no heed to the fact that they were in overwhelming numbers.

Pomp was not a whit behind Barney in a display of reckless bravery. He too shot an Indian down in his tracks, and then he began to butt right and left, and the Indians went down before the human battering ram on all sides.

But there could be but one ending for the exciting combat. The odds were so great that the valor of the Irishman and his colored friend availed them little. They were overwhelmed and borne to the earth by sheer force of the number of savages who fell upon them furiously.

Barney and Pomp would have been put to death then and there, had not the chief of the band interposed to save them, and Frank, Jr., thought it probable that they were only spared that they might be subjected to cruel torture later on.

When Barney and Pomp had been secured, Corrajo, securely bound and also gagged, was led out of the thicket where his captors had concealed him while they set the ambush for his friends.

The gaucho, on account of the gag, had been unable to utter a sound to warn Frank, Jr., and his comrades of the trap which the enemy had set for them.

Corrajo had, as Frank, Jr., concluded, discovered game while on watch, and he had crept away to secure it, not intending to go far. But the game had proven wary, having lately been pursued by native hunters, and it led him some distance. Then suddenly he was surrounded by the Indians, who had been concealed in a thicket, and while he battled manfully, a treacherous blow from the rear had felled him, and he was made a captive and hurried away.

The gag was now removed from Corrajo's mouth, and he explained his absence from the carriage and subsequent capture to his friends as given above.

"We are in the worst possible situation. These natives are cannibals and mercilessly cruel. We shall be tortured to death and then furnish a banquet for the inhuman wretches if we do not escape," said the gaucho, in conclusion.

The prospect was so terrible that, brave and heroic as they were, the hearts of the adventurers sank, and they began to think that they were destined to find their graves in that wild land instead of the lost treasure of which they had come in search.

They were marched forward all day, and at night they reached a temporary camp of the native hunters, whose home was at the village of the scaffold-tombs.

The party which had captured Mr. Reade, Sr., and the doctor, as well as the Electric Horse, were another hunting party which had not met the captors of Frank, Jr., and his friends since both left the Ticunas' village.

The temporary camp of the Ticunas hunters was a collection of hastily constructed huts, the camp they cured the meat they captured cutting it in long strips and drying it in the sun on long poles placed in crocheted sticks, as Frank, Jr., saw a quantity of meat in course of preparation at the camp when he and his companions arrived there.

Frank was placed in one of the huts at the end

of the camp first reached by his captors, and his limbs which had not been bound so as to permit him to walk were secured.

The other members of the party were conveyed to the opposite end of the camp, and bound hand and foot they were placed in a large hut.

As Frank, Jr., parted with his friends the young man said to them:

"While there is life there is hope. If any one of us succeeds in liberating himself he will risk his life to save the rest."

"Yes, We will stand by each other till the death," replied Corrajo.

"We will that same!" said Barney, and Pomp echoed his words.

Such mutual assurances were needless between men who had so often proven their devotion to each other, but the utterances served to cheer and sustain them.

Frank, Jr., no sooner found himself alone in the native hut than he set about trying to liberate himself.

He soon found that it was a fortunate thing that he was clad in mail.

He discovered that by rubbing the thongs about his wrists against the steel plates of his armor he was slowly but surely severing them.

Half an hour's steady work enabled Frank, Jr., to free himself in this way from the fetters that confined his wrists, and then he untied his ankles and gained his feet.

His arms had been taken by the enemy, but they had failed to rob him of a tin box suspended from his girdle.

Glancing about the hut, Frank saw an Indian bow and a quiver filled with arrows. He seized the bow, and slung the quiver of arrows on his back. Night had fallen, but the darkness was not so complete as to prevent him seeing, when he presently crept to the door of the hut, that the Indians were assembled at the other end of the camp, where his friends were confined.

Dropping upon his hands and knees, Frank, Jr., crawled away, and he was soon crouching in the tall pampas grass beyond the camp.

"Now to create a diversion, and draw the savages away from my friends that I may attempt a rescue," said the young inventor mentally.

CHAPTER XXVII.

FRANK, JR., FIRES THE NATIVE CAMP—THE ELECTRIC HORSE IS SIGHTED.

THE young adventurer quickly bethought himself of a ruse which might serve his purpose, for the peril of the situation had not in the least benumbed, or rendered inactive his remarkable brain, which was ever fertile in expedients.

He proceeded to open the tin box which was suspended about his waist by his girdle, while he kept a close watch upon the enemy's camp.

From the box Frank, Jr., took one of a number of the large fire-ball appliances, resembling in their construction great Roman candles, which we have already had occasion to minutely describe.

Then, from the quiver which he had brought from the Indian hut, he selected an arrow with a needle point, and inserted its sharp head into one of the fire-balls.

Then he ignited the fire-ball, fitted the arrow to which he had attached it on the bowstring and took aim at the nearest hut.

Frank had practiced archery at home and he was a fine marksman.

The bowstring was liberated with a sharp "twang," and away sped the shaft of flame. The fuse of the fire-ball sputtered for an instant as it flew through the air like a meteor, and the fire-balls began to discharge themselves as the arrow landed on the hut at which Frank, Jr., had aimed it.

The light reeds of which the hut was built were as dry as tinder, and the fire-balls at once set it on fire.

Frank quickly discharged a second arrow, tipped with a fire-ball, and another hut burst into flames.

The young inventor fired a third shaft, and at once one more hut was added to the conflagration.

Then, while the flames from these three huts began to spread to others near them, the savages discovered the fire, and with mad yells they rushed toward the burning shelters, hoping to save arms and various implements which they had left in them.

In a trice the part of the encampment in which Frank, Jr.'s friends were imprisoned was deserted by the natives.

Meanwhile, under cover of the pampas grass, the instant he had discharged the last fire-ball, Frank, Jr., was swiftly making his way around the camp.

In a moment or so he reached the opposite side, and glided forward to the hut in which he

had seen his friends placed. But just as he reached its entrance a savage came out of it.

Quick as a flash Frank, Jr., clubbed his bow and struck down the Indian, in whose belt he saw his own hunting-knife. Snatching the weapon from the savage, Frank, Jr., bounded into the hut, and with swift strokes of his knife cut the thongs with which the captives were bound, and in a moment all three were liberated.

Then they crept away over the pampas. Meanwhile the Indians had discovered that Frank, Jr., had escaped.

They then attributed the conflagration to his agency, and all at once bethought themselves that but one warrior had been left to guard the other captives.

They came rushing back to the other end of the camp, and the climax of their rage and chagrin was reached when they discovered that the whites had all disappeared.

As soon as they were beyond the camp our friends ran swiftly forward over the pampas, and they shaped their course in the direction whence they had been forced to come.

They had not secured their arms, and Frank, Jr., was the only one of the party who possessed a weapon.

Bending down, so as to screen themselves from sight as far as possible in the pampas grass, for the night was not very dark, the fugitives fled at the top of their speed, while glancing back they saw the savages seeking to take up their trail.

The natives procured fire brands from the burning huts, and by the light thus afforded they found the track through the down-trodden grass which indicated the route taken by our friends, and started to pursue them.

But there had been some delay. The fugitives had obtained an excellent start.

"It's to be a race for life now!" shouted Frank, Jr.

"Would that we had our rifles," said Corrajo. "Without a weapon the nagurs heve the whip hand av us, an' bedad, there's not even a sprig av a stick to be picked up on these plains to bate the heads av thim wid." Barney remarked.

"Dem rascals run berry fast!" cried Pomp, as he glanced back.

"Yes, they are regular sprint runners," assented Frank, Jr.

"And begorra they are gaining on us!" said Barney.

"They are! They are! Can we reach the timber in advance of them?" cried Corrajo.

They were shaping their course toward the woods that bordered the tributary of the Amazon, beside which they had left the Electric Horse, far away to the northward.

The small river had been followed by the savages when they marched the captured explorers away to the camp whence they had just fled.

"If the Electric Horse was only near," said Frank.

"Ah! then we could soon turn the tables on the savages," added Corrajo.

"But we have nothing to anticipate in the way of assistance from the invention. I trust no harm has come to my father or the doctor. They must be terribly alarmed on our account," said Frank, Jr.

But the party needed all their breath now for their race for life, and no more was said then.

Inspired as they were by the thought that life depended on the issue, the four friends ran with a speed which under less terrible and urgent circumstances they would have been unable to accomplish.

They reached the shelter of the woods breathless and utterly exhausted.

"We can run no further. We must climb trees and conceal ourselves among the branches," cried Corrajo, setting the example by swinging himself up among the limbs of a great tree provided with luxuriant foliage.

The others did the same, and a moment or so subsequently they were all ensconced in the trees. Fortunately they found no monkeys among the limbs to betray them by their alarmed cries.

The savages soon burst into the timber and began a search for the escaping fugitives. But the night darkened and they were not discovered, and finally they ceased to hear the sounds of their pursuers moving about and they believed they had returned to their camp.

The fugitives remained concealed in the trees for a long time. The night was well advanced when they fled from the camp of their captors, and when at length they ventured to leave the trees and descend to the ground, night was almost at an end, and on the eastern horizon a faint glow of light was beginning to proclaim the coming dawn.

Corrajo said, as the little party assembled under the great trees of that remote forest of the

Amazon country, whence all knew they might never emerge alive:

"I fear the cunning Indians have resorted to a stratagem to induce us to betray our whereabouts."

"We must proceed with caution," said Frank, Jr.

"And as day will soon dawn we cannot think of leaving the woods," replied the gaucho.

"No, we will follow the river back to the place where we left the Electric Horse. It was fortunate, perhaps, that the savages who captured us did not discover it," Frank, Jr., rejoined.

But at that moment, as they were moving forward, a chorus of the most unearthly yells that ever emanated from savage throats echoed through the forest.

Then from the dense growths of the wood the cunning savages, who had lain concealed and in profound silence, believing the whites were somewhere near at hand, sprang into view.

They charged straight at the little party, and drove them before them out of the woods into the open pampas.

Then a wild, thrilling chase began as Frank, Jr., and his comrades, though believing they were fated to be recaptured, still sped onward.

But all at once, coming from the north, they saw a great globe of fire whose brilliant light illuminated the plain with its glowing reflection. Before the great globe of flame were two smaller ones.

"Hurrah!" shouted Frank, Jr.; "the Electric Horse and carriage is coming!" He recognized the lights. "We shall reach it before we are overtaken, and we are saved!" he added, and they all sprang forward toward the approaching light.

But were they not rushing to certain doom? Were they not to be captured by the savages whom we saw in possession of the Electric Horse?

CHAPTER XXVIII.

SAVED BY THE QUININE-HUNTERS—THE EXPLORERS REUNITED.

As Frank Reade, Jr., and his companions hotly pursued by the Indians fled in the direction whence they had discovered the Electric Horse approaching the young inventor, who was in advance of the rest of the party, suddenly fell into a walk and almost halted as he exclaimed:

"What are those dark forms moving beside the electric carriage, and also coming up in the rear?"

"Mounted men, I think," replied Corrajo. "Merciful Providence! Can it be that our newly awakened hopes are to be dashed to the ground!" cried Frank, Jr.

"Be dad, yez fear the min on horseback hev' captured the Electric Horse," said Barney.

"Gollie! If dat am de case den we is gone," said Pomp.

As the distance between the fugitives, and the electric conveyance was lessened Frank, Jr., and his companions obtained a more distinct view of the horsemen who surrounded the Electric Horse.

"They are not Indians!" cried Corrajo. "Are you quite sure of that?" asked Frank, Jr. "Yes," replied the gaucho.

* * * * *
Meantime, during the occurrence of the events last recorded, certain other incidents were taking place, which the unity of our narrative demands we should now relate.

Guarded by their savage captors, Mr. Reade, Sr., and Dr. Vaneyke were compelled to run the Electric Horse on and on in the direction of the village near the sight of the strange native scaffold-tombs.

We know that every hope had departed from their hearts, leaving them oppressed by the weight of complete and bitter despair.

But as the electric conveyance ran along the timber which grew upon the bank of the tributary to the Amazon about two hours previous to the discovery of the Electric Horse by Frank, Jr., and his comrades, a startling occurrence took place.

Out from the shelter of the wood dashed a band of whites, mounted upon pampas-horses.

The appearance of the mounted party of horsemen was, of course, a most joyful surprise for Mr. Reade, Sr., and the doctor, for they had not thought it possible that they might encounter civilized people in those remote Amazonian wilds.

The moment he beheld the whites Mr. Reade shouted to the doctor:

"I am a-going to turn off the electricity and jump from the carriage. You must also leap out of the rear door, and we'll run to meet the horsemen."

As he thus spoke Mr. Reade, Sr., reversed the

lever, and made a flying leap from the deck of the vehicle.

He landed upon his feet almost as the Electric Horse and carriage stopped. The doctor sprang from the carriage at the same moment.

The sudden movements of the two captives, and the abrupt stop of the Electric Horse was a surprise to the natives, whose attention was at that moment centered upon the approaching horsemen.

But scarcely had the great inventor and his friend alighted upon the ground when, with mad yells, the savages sent a shower of spears and arrows after them.

The escaping men were not hit, however, and they ran toward the approaching horsemen.

As he fled Mr. Reade, Sr., shouted:

"We are Americans! Protect us from the savages who have captured our conveyance. In the name of Heaven we ask it."

"*Si, senors.* The black rascals shall be punished," shouted the Brazilian in the lead of the new arrivals.

In a moment the pampas-riders dashed between the Americans and the savages on the electric carriage, who were now seeking to start the vehicle again.

The mounted party were armed with rifles and other weapons, and they hesitated not to use them. Failing in their attempts to start the Electric Horse, owing to a precaution which Mr. Reade, Sr., did not neglect to take even in the excitement and haste of his flight, the savages abandoned the vehicle and fled.

The horsemen pursued the hostile band for some distance, and then they galloped back to the electric conveyance of which Mr. Reade, Sr., and the doctor had meantime taken possession.

"Whom have we to thank for our rescue?" asked Mr. Reade, Sr., of the strangers.

"We are a party of quinine-hunters, senor. Our camp is to the southward, where chinchona or Peruvian bark abounds. We were prospecting for more of the precious trees when we discovered you," answered the leader of the band, who appeared to be a very intelligent man.

"Your appearance was providential, and we owe you our gratitude. Please distribute this purse of gold among your men," said Mr. Reade, Sr., and he placed a pocket-book in the Brazilian's hands.

"My brave fellows will be glad of your generous gift. They are poor men, and the earnings of 'barkers' are not the largest," said the recipient of the inventor's bounty.

Then a conversation of some length ensued.

The quinine-hunters were filled with wonder and admiration at the Electric Horse and carriage, and Mr. Reade explained something of its general principles in response to their curious inquiries.

Moreover, he told them about Frank, Jr., and his comrades, and anxiously inquired if they had seen them.

To this question the Brazilians returned a negative answer, and Mr. Reade and the doctor declared their intention of journeying about in the neighborhood in quest of the missing ones.

Then one of the Brazilians said:

"We discovered the tracks of white men in the woods. They went southward, and the trail showed that they were accompanied by a large band of natives."

"It is as we feared. My son and his comrades have been captured by the natives," said Mr. Reade, Sr.

"Yes, we can no longer doubt as to that," the old doctor assented.

"If we can be of any assistance we are at your service," said the leader of the quinine hunters.

"A thousand thanks. Assist us and you shall be still further rewarded. While you are in my service your time shall pay you better than it would at your work of gathering chinchona," replied Mr. Reade, Sr.

"Our way lies to the southward, and that is the very direction in which you wish to pursue your friends. We are ready to follow you," said the leader of the "barkers."

"Very well. While one of your scouts goes along on the trail of our friends in the woods and from time to time signals us, the electric conveyance shall be run along the confines of the timber on the open pampas," Mr. Reade, Sr., rejoined.

This plan was carried out.

The horseman rode along with the carriage, leading the horse of one of their number who followed the trail in the woods, and signaled the party by means of fire-balls provided by Mr. Reade, Sr., occasionally.

Thus it was that when Frank, Jr., and his friends discovered the approach of the Electric Horse and carriage his father and the doctor were once more masters of the great invention and surrounded by friends.

A moment after the horsemen about the elec-

tric conveyance were discovered by Frank, Jr., his father saw him and shouted in great joy:

"Frank! Frank! We have found friends! Hasten! Hasten!"

As they heard these words a great shout went up from the young inventor and his comrades. It was a cry of joy and involuntary expression of delight they experienced.

They rushed forward still pursued by the savages, and gained the interior of the electric conveyance which was almost stopped for their conveyance.

Then Mr. Reade, Sr., spoke a word of direction to the horsemen as he embraced his son, and the mounted party made a flank movement which placed them on the side of the vehicle opposite to that from whence the Indians were approaching.

The succeeding moment, acting upon a suggestion made by his father, Frank, Jr., sprang to the electric-battery of repeating Winchester rifles, and discharged volley after volley from the sixteen shooters into the ranks of the Indians as they came within range.

The savages were repulsed, and they retreated back to the woods while the electric vehicle drawn by the tireless metal steed continued onward to the camp of the quinine-hunters, which they were now invited to visit, and on the way mutual explanations were made between the reunited friends.

The camp of the "barkers"—as they are called in Brazil—was situated in a large wood composed almost exclusively of chinchona trees, and a number of rude cabins had been erected there.

The "barkers" had penetrated further into the interior that season than ever before, and it was a fortunate circumstance for our adventurers that they had done so, else they would not have met.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE WONDERFUL SUSPENSION BRIDGE—AMONG THE ALLIGATORS.

THE Indians had been left far behind, and our friends, who needed rest, determined to remain at the "barkers'" camp until they were recuperated.

"Quinine was a great discovery—a boon for suffering humanity, which cannot be overrated," said Mr. Reade, Sr., as the American explorers proceeded to make themselves at home in the hospitable camp.

"When was quinine discovered?" asked Frank, Jr.

"In the year sixteen hundred," answered Mr. Reade, Sr.

"In sixteen thirty-eight," corrected the doctor. "I suppose," he added, "you are all familiar with the story."

"No, be dad," said Barney.

"Well, it is said that the Princess Chinchona, wife of the Viceroy of Peru, lay seriously ill of a fever in the great palace at Lima. The doctors could do no more for her, and she was informed that she must die. Then an old Brazilian brought her some of the wonderful bark, and it completely cured her in a few days. After that the quinia-trees were called chinchona in the countess' honor, and thereafter the virtues of the medicinal bark became known all over the world."

"Isn't quinia sometimes called Jesuit bark?" inquired Frank, Jr.

"Yes, for there is also a legend that its virtues were first revealed by the natives to the ancient Jesuit missionaries," assented the doctor.

"Certainly the appearance of the chinchona-trees is beautiful," said Corrajo.

The gaucho was right, and the party looked with admiration at the lanceolate leaves with their delicate crimson veins. The wonderful trees were covered with small white blossoms hanging in clusters, and from them emanated a rich fragrance which pervaded the forest.

It was interesting to watch the barkers gathering the chinchona.

The *cascañeros* felled the trees, and carefully removed the white bark which they pressed flat and made into large packages, and sewed up in canvas ready for transportation.

The barkers sang at their work, and seemed a light-hearted and care-free party.

The explorers resumed their journey after a day's rest, during which time Dr. Vaneyke devoted himself to the study of the ancient cipher, but with what success he did not make known then.

They soon reached the bank of the tributary of the Amazon, along which they had been journeying when the last adventures occurred.

It was now necessary that the river should be crossed.

While the electric conveyance was halted and the project of constructing a raft was discussed,

Frank, Jr., and Barney scouted along the bank in one direction, while Corrajo went in another. They were in quest of a place where the river might be forded.

Frank and Barney were hardly out of sight of the electric conveyance when both suddenly halted and uttered surprised exclamations.

They saw in advance of them one of those remarkable triumphs of native ingenuity, which are found in parts of Brazil and other portions of South America—a wonderful suspension bridge.

"Be gob, an' is it the nagurs that built the loikes av that?" cried Barney, gazing in open-mouthed wonder at the remarkable bridge.

"Yes," replied Frank. "I have read of these singular structures, but this is the first one I have ever seen."

"Be me soul, I'd not hev thought the heathen could do the loike. Let's take a close look at the same; an' faith, if it's strong enough to hould the Electric Horse, it's dry shod we'se may cross wid him," said Barney.

"That's so, but I hardly think the bridge can sustain the weight of the great metal horse and carriage," replied Frank.

Then they approached the bridge, and upon reaching it they found it was composed of the tough fibers of the *Brazilian osier*, the flexibility and strength of whose fibers is unequaled by any product of South America.

The *maquay plant*, as the osier is called, had been twisted into massive cables, which were secured to trees on each side of the river, which was more than four hundred feet wide.

The floor was of braided fibers closely interlaced.

A glance, however, assured Frank, Jr., that the surprising structure was only a swinging foot-bridge, and therefore entirely impracticable for the passage of the heavy Electric Horse and the attached carriage.

After inspecting the aerial bridge, and observing that the floor of the structure was worn, and that there were other indices to indicate that it was frequently traversed, the young inventor and Barney continued their search for the ford.

But they found no place shallow enough to admit of the passage of the Electric Horse and carriage.

Finally they returned to the vehicle, and so reported. Corrajo had also returned, and his report was equally discouraging.

It became evident that there was no other way, and that a raft must be constructed.

The electric saws were brought into requisition at once, and the work of sawing the trees for a raft was begun. The great saws worked as well now as at the first occasion for their services, and we need not dwell again upon the method of their action, as all that has been fully explained.

Meanwhile, Frank, Jr., told his friends of his discovery of the suspension bridge.

"Ha!" exclaimed the doctor, "I must see it! Those singular structures are very rare now in Brazil. The natives seem to have almost lost the art of constructing them."

"Well, we can get along very well without you and Frank while we are sawing the timber for the raft," said Mr. Reade, Sr.

"All right," responded Frank. "I'll show you the way to the bridge, doctor."

"Thanks. We will set out at once."

They took their rifles and made their way swiftly along the stream.

Reaching the bridge they admired it, and the old naturalist discoursed learnedly upon bridge-building among the ancients and the aboriginal tribes.

Frank walked on the bridge and passed half way over it, but the doctor contented himself with remaining on the bank.

Beyond the bridge was a dense jungle, and what it might conceal the explorers could only imagine.

When Frank, Jr., had gone about half way across the bridge the doctor called out to him:

"I would go no further, Frank!"

"Why not?"

"The bridge may lead to a native village. In fact I am sure it does. Some of the savages may be lurking on the other bank even now."

"Oh, I think not," replied Frank, carelessly. He was looking down into the water of the river as he spoke, and in the next breath he added:

"Cayman! The river is full of them!"

He had sighted a number of alligators called cayman, the largest of their species found in the lagoons and streams of the Amazon Valley.

"Ah, they are man-eaters. The gigantic *saurians* would soon make a meal of you if you were within their reach," said the doctor.

Just then the young inventor caught sight of Corrajo approaching along the bank further up stream.

"There comes Corrajo!" he exclaimed.

The gaucho continued to approach slowly. Frank remained leaning on the rail of the bridge watching the monstrous ogres of the river below him.

But all at once he reeled and uttered an alarmed cry that startled both the doctor and Corrajo, who had now almost reached the bridge.

Frank had suddenly felt the frail mid-air bridge sway and oscillate beneath his feet. Not a breath of air was stirring and he had not moved.

The young inventor was alarmed. He discerned that the motion was imparted to the bridge from the further side.

Turning to retrace his steps he saw with horror the heads of a couple of hideous savages appear above the jungle growth at the end of the bridge on the further side of the stream.

Then succeeded another discovery which thrilled Frank, Jr., from head to foot with absolute terror.

The young man saw that the natives were hacking away at the frail cables which sustained the bridge, and he understood that they meant to sever them, and that he was in imminent peril of being precipitated down among the alligators.

Frank darted toward the bank where he had left Dr. Vaneyke as swiftly as possible, for the bridge now oscillated so violently that he believed it was almost about to fall.

"Quick! Quick! or you are lost!" cried the old doctor as he too discovered the natives, and saw what they were up to.

"Merci! Merci!" yelled Corrajo, throwing off his poucho and taking his great pampas-knife beneath his teeth.

As the gaucho spoke, the swinging bridge went down and Frank Reade, Jr., with it, uttering a scream of awful terror.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE BATTLE WITH THE ALLIGATORS—THE AMAZON CROSSED—NEW PERIL.

FRANK, JR., sank out of sight under the water. Corrajo was about to plunge into the stream to go to his rescue, heedless of the danger from the alligators, when to his joy he discovered a native dug-out, or canoe, concealed in the bushes close beside him.

The gaucho leaped into the frail craft, uttered a shout, and shot the paddles through the water, thus sending the boat toward the spot where the young inventor had vanished with the speed of an arrow.

Frank, Jr., came to the surface, and he beheld Corrajo in the canoe but a few feet distant. A glad cry escaped his lips.

"Quick, Corrajo! Ha! The alligators have sighted me!" he added, in tones of wildest alarm as he saw a couple of the hideous reptiles making toward him.

It seemed that our hero was destined to be devoured alive.

The doctor uttered a groan and closed his eyes, but out the terrible scene.

Corrajo was cool, and he cried:

"But will save you!"

"I will save you!" he said, and the swiftly approaching canoe between them.

The alligators opened their great jaws, and threatened to overthrow and demolish the canoe.

Still Corrajo did not lose his presence of mind, and his wonderful nerve did not desert him.

He had his knife clutched in his teeth still, but he was close upon the alligators, when he saw several movements with wonderful agility.

Dropping the right hand, he suddenly snatched his knife from his mouth, and with a quick stab made a terrible in-

The great blade entered the eye of the alligator.

The monster gave a leap which carried him half way out of the water, and his huge tail swung round and knocked Corrajo overboard.

At the same time the wounded reptile dove to the bottom of the river.

But the other cayman was close upon Frank, Jr., with a voracious intent.

While Dr. Vaneyke, spellbound with terror, witnessed the calamity which had befallen the young gaucho, and while Frank succeeded in driving his own knife, while he sustained himself on the surface with ease, being an excellent swimmer.

The young inventor meant to defend himself with his knife as well as he could against the attack of the cayman.

But before the monster reached him Corrajo alighted on his back and drove his long-bladed knife into his brain through his eye.

The alligator imitated the first one the gaucho attacked.

Down he went to the bottom of the river.

Corrajo was carried down with the monster.

But he came to the surface again almost immediately. Meanwhile Frank, Jr., had reached the canoe, which had drifted toward him, and entered it. Corrajo clambered into the frail craft as soon as he gained the surface after he went down with the cayman, and with mutual congratulations, while the doctor uttered cries of delight, the brave couple paddled to the shore.

Meanwhile the treacherous natives who had severed the cables of the bridge had disappeared. "We have not seen the last of those rascals. They would never have cut the bridge if they had not resolved to dispute our advance," said Corrajo.

The three friends now returned to the place where they had left the Electric Horse and wagon. The work of sawing the necessary timber for a raft was soon completed, and then they set about getting it in shape.

The maritime structure was put together without difficulty, for the explorers carried all the necessary tools and material, such as nails, spikes and the like needed, with them.

Frank, Jr., superintended the building of the raft, and it was constructed on scientific principles.

When all was in readiness the Electric Horse and carriage was run down the sloping bank on to the raft which was secured to the shore by rope cable. Nobly the raft sustained the Electric Horse and carriage. A pair of sweeps were arranged on the sides and a rude rudder in front.

The explorers cast off the rope-cables and embarked without the slightest fear. Pomp and Barney manned the sweeps, while Frank, Jr., took the rudder.

The current was not very swift, and the passage of the river, and a landing on its opposite bank was accomplished without difficulty.

The raft was then abandoned, and the journey resumed, after a number of wild ducks and an antelope had been shot by Corrajo and Frank, Jr. Night came on presently, but it was determined to continue the journey without pausing. Just as the Electric Horse was getting under way an attack was made on it by a band of natives who came from the direction of the swinging bridge, and who suddenly burst into view out of the timber along the river bank.

A single volley from the electric battery of Winchester rifles served to disperse the band, and they retired whence they came.

The Amazon valley abounds in butterflies, and nowhere else do they attain such rare beauty. A species of these insects seems to be luminous at night, resembling fire-flies, and afar off beyond the area of electrical illumination, the explorers saw their lights like a myriad stars gleaming through the night.

And now, while the explorers peacefully continued their journey, an oath bound league was being formed against them afar off in the village of the scaffold-tombs.

The aged Ticunas chief, accompanied by the half-breed Portuguese, and the native army, had arrived at the village of the "sacred grounds," and there all the chiefs of the tribe assembled.

In the shadow of the scaffold-tombs, upon which reposed, in everlasting sleep, the remains of their dead, the savage chiefs knelt and bound themselves by an oath administered by the Ticunas priests never to abandon the pursuit of their friends until they had secured the cipher-cube and put the explorers to death.

The league of the pampas thus formed, comprised the chiefs who ruled over a vast territory, and in his native Portuguese tongue the half-breed might have been heard muttering to himself in exultant tones. He anticipated that the pampas league would accomplish the purpose which, at his instigation, it had been formed for.

The journey to the banks of the Amazon, which had made a vast curve in its course to the southward, was accomplished by the explorers, and they found themselves at the close of a pleasant day looking out upon the mighty river which they must now cross.

Once more a raft was constructed, but this time greater care was taken in building it. The logs were sawed of greater size and Frank Reade, Jr., directed the construction of the raft, taking into account the capacity of each timber for floating. This was necessary, because the different varieties of wood varied greatly in their specific density.

The explorers had very fortunately reached a point on the great river where the water ran smoothly for perhaps a quarter of a mile, but beyond that distance on each side was a long extent of rapids, and in them no boat or raft could cross. Such craft would be dashed in pieces.

The great river was crossed in safety after the raft was built, and when the other bank was

reached and a landing made, Dr. Vaneyke, who had complained of being ill for some time, declared he did not feel able to journey further. The motion of the electric carriage gave him great pain, even when it proceeded slowly.

It was decided to camp on the river bank until the doctor's condition improved. The electric carriage was drawn into the shade, and while, for a number of days, everything possible was done for the sick man, the surrounding country was explored and no natives found. Frank, Jr., made a fine botanical collection during this enforced delay, and abundance of fish from the river and game from the woods supplied the larder of the adventurers. A couple of canoes had been made in which the party paddled along the river as they wished. But one day, just at nightfall, while the doctor was yet unable to be moved, though his condition was improving, a vast army of natives was discovered approaching on the trail of the Electric Horse. Through his telescope, Frank, Jr., saw the Ticunas chief, who had recognized the cipher cube, and the half-breed Portuguese among the enemy. He knew the natives would quickly construct canoes and seek to cross the river.

Great peril menaced the party, but Frank, Jr., suddenly thought of trying to prevent the savages crossing the river by means of a scientific appliance.

CHAPTER XXXI.

BARNEY GETS THE WRONG BOTTLE—PLANTING SUBMARINE TORPEDOES.

THE approach of the native forces led by the Portuguese half-breed and his colleague, the old Ticunas chief, was witnessed with feelings of the greatest apprehension by all the little band of adventurous explorers.

"Begorra!" cried Barney. "The nagurs will find a way to cross the river an' it's a ruction we'll be ather havin' now, for the ould docther can't be moved, an' we'se can't run forinest the hathen and leave the docther behind."

The reckless Irishman was the only one of the party who seemed to find satisfaction in the prospect of an encounter with the enemy, and he proceeded to cut a couple of stout clubs.

"Golly! dat Irisher makes dis coon tired. Dem brack savages are a hundred to one of we 'uns. What am yer doin' now, Barney?" said Pomp.

"Is it blind ye are? Don't yez see for yourself? Oim cuttin' a sprig av a shillalah."

"A stick am no good against so many," replied Pomp, in a disgusted tone. He was engaged in mixing a decoction of medical herbs in a bottle which had contained whisky, and the doctor was instructing him in the preparation of the botanical remedy upon which he relied to cure his malady, which was a severe fever.

The old naturalist was aware that his devoted friends would never desert him, and he said when Frank, Jr., announced his discovery of the natives:

"My illness has come at the very time when it is most necessary that we should all be in possession of health and strength. I regret bitterly that I have become a burden to you, and that your retreat is retarded on my account, for I fear you will be overwhelmed by the savages if you delay here."

"No," said Frank, Jr., "I mean the Indians shall not reach our side of the river."

"And there is not one of our party base enough to think of proceeding without you," said Mr. Reade, Sr.

"Corrajo will defend the old master with his life," affirmed the devoted gaucho.

"You are all brave hearts—noble—true," said the doctor with emotion.

Meanwhile Pomp had completed mixing the decoction in the whisky bottle, and putting it in the place of a bottle of the same kind, which contained the finest "Old Rye," upon which he had seen Barney casting longing, wistful glances all day, he stole away with a broad grin on his humorous features, casting a sly look at the Irishman, who was now returning from a clump of bushes carrying a couple of stout shillalahs.

"But how can you prevent the natives crossing the river?" asked Dr. Vaneyke of Frank, Jr., presently, as he saw him enter the electric carriage.

"I mean to use submarine torpedoes."

"Have you them with you?"

"Oh, yes. Our locker is the repository for a quantity of them."

"Well, well. What haven't you brought with you?"

"A little of everything we thought we might need."

"You intend to plant your torpedoes in the river, eh?"

"Exactly. You see there is less than a quarter of a mile of river practical for the passage of

boats or rafts. The rapids extending above and below that distance are our safe-guards against the savages in those directions."

"True. But to guard that quarter of a mile of smooth channel you will require a large number of torpedoes, and it will take time to set them."

"That's a fact. But I've no apprehension on that score. The natives cannot attempt the passage of the river until they have constructed floats of some kind, and while they are thus engaged, I think we shall have plenty of time to set the submarine torpedoes."

"And you think you have a sufficient number of torpedoes for your purpose?"

"Yes. It will not be necessary to place them near together, as they will be connected by wires, and the explosions will be so terrific that each one will protect a considerable extent of the surface we must guard."

"You reassure me. Your idea is certainly practical."

"Yes, as my torpedoes are a duplicate in miniature of the most improved variety, such as were used during our late American war with success."

Just then Barney was heard to utter a roar of disgust, and all glanced toward him.

The Irishman had stolen up to the side of the doctor unobserved by any one excepting Pomp, and helped himself to the contents of the whisky bottle containing the medicine prepared by the darky, thinking it "the rale ould stuff."

Barney was all doubled up.

"Worra, worra! Begob, it's sea-sick I am. Me stomach is quarrelin' wid me whole body, be-dad, an' tryin' to lave me!" he cried, as he imitated the sea-sick person who in hot haste makes for the ship's rail.

"Bad luck to the whisky!" Barney added, thus inadvertently betraying himself.

Even the doctor laughed, and they all understood the situation exactly.

Pomp was delighted.

The darky threw himself down and rolled about in the grass.

"Yah, yah, yah! Who stole de whisky—who stole de whisky?" he roared.

Then Barney was mad, and off came his coat, and he jumped on it and spit on his hands.

"It's the nagur did it! It's afther pizenin' me he's been doin'! Whoop! but I'll—ough, ough!" and again Barney found it necessary to contend with the difficulty in his stomach.

And Pomp laughed the louder.

"I'll bate the head av the nagur this toime, be dad! I'll be tacin' the loikes av the blackguard till he'll play none av his tricks on gentlemen!" yelled Barney.

His Irish was really up, and the more Pomp laughed at his discomfiture the madder he got.

"Look out fur me, yez black murtherer! It's yersel' as sit out to hev me kilt wid pizen. Now, begob, yez will laugh out av the wrong side av yer mouth," Barney went on.

Then he rushed at Pomp.

The nimble darky was on his feet in an instant, and leaping aside as Barney made a blow at him, he ducked down for a butt.

The Irishman saw him coming, and he sprang aside, and Pomp shot past him like a flash.

They were right on the bank of the river, and Pomp couldn't stop in time to save himself, and down into the water he went with a splash.

Then it was Barney's turn to laugh.

"Ha! ha! ha! it's plunge baths the nagur is takin'! How do yez like buttin' wather, ye spalpeen av darkness?" he shouted.

But Pomp came up smiling, though dripping wet, of course, and he made another charge at the Irishman.

That time Barney was not quick enough to avoid him, and he was butted over and closed up as if he was jointed in the middle.

"Dat ul fix yer all right—yah! yah! Set dat Irish ten-pin up in de udder alley!" cried Pomp.

"Now, then, I call time, and declare the battle a draw. We have serious matters to consider, and work to do. No more nonsense," said Frank, Jr.

Barney had enough of the "ruction" for that time, and Pomp was satisfied.

"Now, then, to get out the submarine torpedoes," continued Frank, Jr.

He was assisted in this work by Barney and Pomp.

The torpedoes were metal globes containing dynamite water tight, and each was provided with an extension tube or bar a number of feet long. The end of the bar was intended to extend up to the surface of the water or nearly so, and the torpedo submerged under it could be readily exploded by a blow against the rod, for it connected with a trigger in the torpedo.

The submarine torpedoes were carefully loaded into the two canoes which the explorers had previously constructed as heretofore mentioned.

Darkness soon fell upon the scene.

Then Corrajo and Pomp in one boat, and Frank, Jr. and Barney in the other, pulled away in opposite directions to set the torpedoes.

The gloom concealed the explorers' movements from the enemy, although they were now pretty close to the river.

The torpedoes were set in a double line, and their almost submerged rods were connected by a wire. Thus, though a boat should happen to run between the rods, it would strike the wire and explode the nearest torpedo, just as though it had come in direct contact with the torpedo rod itself.

The work of setting the torpedoes occupied several hours, for the explosives had to be handled with the greatest care.

Meanwhile the savages arrived at the bank of the river. They had evidently discovered the Electric Horse before night fell, and before Frank, Jr., and his friends finished planting the torpedoes they saw the lights of their enemy's camp-fires, and heard sounds which assured them the savages had lost no time in beginning to construct floats to cross the Amazon on.

Frank, Jr., and Barney returned to camp, and Corrajo and Pomp joined them there, and reported that they had set their line of explosives all the way to the rapids.

CHAPTER XXXII.

A REGION OF WILD HORSES AND CATTLE—A MEETING ON THE PAMPAS.

"THE chances are the savages will attempt the passage of the river during the night," said Corrajo.

"Many hands make light work, and before dawn they can no doubt construct a large number of rafts," assented Frank, Jr.

"Yes, and they are skillful raft and canoe-builders. With their hatchets they will fell small trees and lash them together with ropes made of the *oster fibers*, such as were used in the construction of the suspension bridge," replied Corrajo.

Then in silence, with weapons ready for immediate use, and without a light to make known their precise position, the adventurers watched and waited for further developments not without feelings of anxiety.

Meanwhile Dr. Vaneyke took the medicine which Barney had sampled in proper doses, and as the hours went by the old gentleman began to feel so much improved that he assured his friends he thought he had at last hit upon the cure he needed.

Midnight came, and the night advanced until it wanted but a short time until the dawn, and at last the explorers on the banks of the Amazon heard the sound of paddles in the water.

They knew then that at last the savages were making an effort to cross to them upon crafts of some sort.

The moments went by.

As the torpedoes had been planted at about one third of the distance from the bank occupied by our friends to the opposite bank, the enemy could cross two-thirds of the river's width before they arrived at the line of the submarine explosives.

Thus, of course, some time elapsed before the explorers could obtain a knowledge of the result of Frank, Jr.'s, last experiment.

When it seemed to the young inventor that the natives must have reached the torpedoes, he began to get somewhat nervous.

So much depended upon the issue that it was but natural his anxiety should be most intense.

"Seems to me, begorra, it's about time for the Fourth av July celebration," whispered Barney.

"Yes. If we do not hear from the torpedoes presently I shall conclude they have failed us, though it seems impossible that they could do so," said Frank, Jr.

But the anxious little party was no longer to be held in suspense.

All at once an explosion took place.

It was accompanied by a dull booming sound, and a tremendous splashing of the waves as though a waterspout had burst.

Then wild yells, shouts, affrighted screams, and other sounds from the natives told that the exploded torpedo had done severe execution.

"Gollie! De fire-crackers under water am all right!" cried Pomp, gleefully.

And almost immediately there came another explosion from the river.

Succeeding this second discharge followed half a dozen others.

Then a perfect pandemonium of howls, yells and shouts of all kinds came up from the river. It was as though an army of fiends had taken possession of the water, and were engaged in a furious combat there amid the enshrouding darkness.

The explorers felt confident that Frank, Jr.'s last experiment was a complete success, for soon the sounds of splashing of paddles, shouts, yells and groans all grew fainter and fainter, and gradually died away into silence as the savages receded.

It was quite evident that they had beat a retreat to the bank whence they had come, and it could scarcely be doubted that many of them had perished when the explosions occurred.

"Only one line of the torpedoes has been disturbed. Even if they make a second attempt to reach our side of the river they cannot pass through far where the first line has been discharged," said Frank, Jr.

But the natives seemed to have determined to wait for daylight before again attempting the passage of the river, for the night passed and no further sound was heard upon the water.

The dawn of day came at length, and the red sun shone from an azure, cloudless sky.

The doctor now said:

"I am free from pain, and I feel much stronger. I think I can be moved now without danger and with little personal suffering. We will start forward at once."

Every one was delighted at this.

The doctor really looked wonderfully improved. In a single night the medicine he had taken had accomplished much in the way of a cure.

The doctor was placed on a bunk in the electric carriage, and a start was soon made.

Through his telescope Frank could discern the army of natives still on the bank of the Amazon beyond its muddy tide, and he thought they were about to again try to make a crossing.

The Electric Horse proceeded swiftly all day and the enemy was left behind. For some distance the woods of the Amazon was traversed, but it was open, and the trees grew so far apart that the electric vehicle passed along among them without difficulty.

Finally the explorers emerged upon the pampas once more.

"We are now coming to the region of wild horses and cattle," said Corrajo.

"What a vast country the pampas cover," said Mr. Reade, Sr.

"Yes. They are more than nine hundred miles in breadth, and cover an area of three hundred and fifteen thousand square miles," remarked the doctor.

"We shall see the wild horses and cattle in vast droves and herds, and this is the land of my brother gauchos," said Corrajo.

"An' fat is that? Begob it is a big goose er a wild turkey av giant size!" cried Barney.

All glanced in the direction which he indicated as he spoke and they saw a huge bird racing over the pampas at great speed.

"That is the rhea, or South American ostrich. He can give the fleetest horse a long chase, but the gauchos catch him with the lasso," said Corrajo.

"Let's run him down!" cried Frank.

"All right! He can't outrun the Electric Horse," assented Mr. Reade, Sr.

The doctor was so much improved now that he came on deck, and he was as much surprised himself at his rapid recovery as his friends were.

In a moment the Electric Horse was racing after the pampas ostrich. Corrajo, with his lasso in hand, stood on deck and was ready for a cast. The ostrich did its best to escape, but soon the electric steed overhauled it, and the gaucho threw his lasso over the long neck of the great bird, and it was strangled. But after removing some of its finest feathers, the ostrich was set at liberty again and he scurried away like the wind.

Just then the blast of a horn was heard.

"The gaucho's horn! Some of the pampas herdsmen are coming!" cried Corrajo.

All glanced in the direction whence the sound seemed to proceed, and they beheld a band of mounted men advancing at a gallop.

They were gauchos, the centaurs of the pampas, who almost live in the saddle. Drawing nearer the gauchos were seen to be stalwart handsome fellows, gayly dressed and well armed. Their mounts were the most superb specimens of South American horse-flesh.

The herdsmen greeted Corrajo, whom they at once recognized as one of their own class, warmly, but more than one of the *mamelukes* of the Brazilian plains crossed himself superstitiously, and regarded the Electric Horse with alarm.

But a few words of explanation from Corrajo made the intelligent gauchos, in whose veins often runs the best blood of the old Spanish grandees, understand what the great invention really was.

Then Corrajo conversed with the gauchos further.

They informed him they were in search of the

salteadores or pampas robbers, who had been stealing cattle from well-stocked ranchos to the north, and who had been outlawed by the Brazilian government for running off vast wild herds, which no individual claimed, across the frontiers of neighboring States.

"The rascals are not merely cattle-stealers, but they are bold, desperate characters, who rob any one they can, and they do not hesitate at murder when they are resisted," said the leader of the gauchos, as he concluded his remarks about the salteadores, as the cattle thieves and pampas robbers are locally called.

"Are you following the trail of the band now? I think I so understood you to say," Frank, Jr., remarked.

"Yes. We have with us a most celebrated vaquerro (guide) and trailer. But we must not delay, for we fear the robbers mean to intercept a diamond train. They are making for the route of the diamond trains, which come from the mines far away to the southward, beyond the Geral mountains in the Cuyaba country.

"Ah, if we only had your wonderful Electric Horse and carriage we could soon vanquish the robbers and obtain the reward offered for them by his imperial majesty, Dom Pedro," said another gaucho.

Frank, Jr.'s, eyes flashed, and he said:

"What do you say, father? We owe the emperor a good turn. Why not join the chase of the cattle-stealers?"

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE ELECTRIC HORSE IN PURSUIT OF THE PAMPAS ROBBERS.

MR. READE, Sr., saw that Frank was taken with the idea of joining the pursuit of the pampas robbers, but he hesitated about giving his consent.

"Yes, yes," cried Corrajo, with unusual excitement, while his great, handsome eyes blazed fiercely, "let us help the gauchos. I owe the villainous salteadores a debt."

"How so, brother?" asked the gaucho chief.

"The scoundrels burned my father's ranch house and ran off his cattle and killed my brother. It was Plata's band who did the cruel work years ago," answered Corrajo.

"Ha! Plata, eh? Well, this is fortunate."

"Why, I heard Plata was killed?"

"A mistake, my friend. It is Plata and his band we are in pursuit of now."

"Say you so?"

"It is the truth."

"Then, Mr. Reade, I ask it as a personal favor that we pursue the wretch," said Corrajo, urgently.

"Come, father, consent. It will not delay us long," Frank, Jr., hastened to say.

"What do you think about it?" asked Mr. Reade, Sr., turning to Dr. Vaneyke.

"I know Corrajo has longed for years to meet Plata, the robber of the pampas. I would advise that we lend the gauchos our assistance," replied the doctor.

"Then we will do so," said Mr. Reade, Sr.

"Good! The Americanos have made us their friends forever," said the chief of the gauchos.

Corrajo expressed his delight at this decision, and it was arranged that the Electric Horse should follow the gauchos.

"Ah! when we come in sight of them they cannot escape the pursuit of the electric steed. I shall call the villainous Plata to account at last," said Corrajo, exultantly, as the Electric Horse moved forward, led by the gauchos, who dashed away on the robbers' trail at full speed.

"The diamond lands are a long distance to the southward, but trains laden with the precious gems traverse these plains at this season bound for northern markets in both Brazil and Peru," said the doctor. "The diamond district has been the scene of much strife and bloodshed," he continued, "for after they were first discovered by some Portuguese adventurers, who were compelled to make known the secret to the government, the country was declared the special property of the crown, and guards placed about it to keep out all intruders.

"But many sought to enter the land of gems, and secure wealth. As a consequence for a long time there were frequent battles between the prospectors and the government guards.

"In the days of slavery the diamond fields were worked by slaves, and in order to furnish the laborers with an incentive for diligent search it was the law that any slave who found a gem weighing 17 1-2 carats should be set free."

"An excellent reward for fidelity. But I should presume it must have been necessary to keep a close watch on the slaves to prevent their stealing the diamonds and making off with them," remarked Mr. Reade, Sr.

"Such was the case. At the close of each

day's work the slaves, who labored under the eyes of their task-masters, were closely searched, and if any of them were discovered with diamonds secreted on their persons they were severely punished," replied the doctor.

As the Electric Horse and carriage sped along over the level plain the explorers caught more than one glimpse of vast droves of wild horses that scurried away at full speed as they approached.

They also saw great droves of wild cattle grazing upon the rich pampas pasturage, and these, too, fled with affrighted bellows at the sight of the strange conveyance.

Now and then a hen ostrich frightened from her nest started up in the path of the Electric Horse, but although a sharp lookout was constantly kept ahead, no human creature was discovered for a long time.

The speed of the Electric Horse was constantly regulated, so as to just keep up with the gaucho trailers, and not distance them.

Night was approaching when the leader of the trailers announced that the tracks of the robbers were now growing so fresh that he was sure they could not be far ahead.

Half an hour later Frank, Jr., through his telescope sighted a band of pampas riders far away to the southward.

The young inventor immediately announced his discovery, and a halt was made while the chief of the gauchos looked through Frank, Jr.'s glass.

In a moment he cried:

"They are Plata and his band! I recognize the rascals!"

A moment subsequently while he still looked through the powerful magnifier, he added:

"Merci! There is another company of riders approaching from the south! Ha! I see the mules of the diamond train! The robbers are making for it, and they will attack and rob the train before we can overtake them on horseback!"

"Then picket your animals here. Leave one of your number behind to watch them and the rest of you board the electric carriage, and we'll run down the robbers with the motive power of the lightning!" cried Frank, Jr., with his usual quickness of thought.

"Excellent! The young Americano has said it!" cried the gaucho chief in delight.

Then Frank's suggestion was quickly carried out.

The horses of the gauchos were picketed, and while one of their party remained with the animals, the rest boarded the electric carriage.

The quarters were a trifle crowded, but there was no danger that the additional weight of this accession to the explorers' party would endanger the stout structure.

In a few moments the electric conveyance was bowling along again at greater speed than before.

Meanwhile, Frank, Jr., continued to watch the robbers and the approaching diamond train through his glass, and he saw that the latter was composed of a dozen men, well mounted, and a number of pack mules.

But the robbers numbered about thirty men, and so it was evident that the salvation of the diamond train depended upon the explorers and the gauchos.

The attention of the robbers was centered upon the train which they meant to rob, and it seemed they had not discovered the almost noiseless approach of the electric conveyance.

Presently the sounds of gun shots reverberated over the pampas, and Frank, Jr., saw that the robbers were within range of the diamond train, and he knew they were beginning the attack.

"Now, then, to get ready for action," he cried.

Then the sides of the carriage were quickly turned up so as to form a bulwark for the deck, and behind the shelter thus secured thronged the gauchos, their rifles leveled and ready.

Frank made everything ready for a discharge of the Winchester rifle-battery, by means of electricity, and then with tremendous shouts the gauchos and the explorers, carried by the electric carriage, rushed down upon the robbers as they in turn charged upon the diamond train.

The electric bell rang loudly, and the robbers turned and discovered the enemy. They were surprised and amazed, but wheeling quickly they leveled their weapons and sent a volley of shots at the electric outfit, which, however, did no harm.

The succeeding instant the broadside of the Winchester battery was brought to bear on the robbers and Frank, Jr., discharged it, while the gauchos also poured a fusillade of shots from their guns into the ranks of the pampas outlaws.

Then those who survived the destructive double volley wheeled their horses and dashed away

eastward toward the timbered banks of a small stream.

The electric conveyance pursued them, and several were overtaken and secured, but a few of the party escaped into the woods and among them was Plata, the chief of the band.

"Long live the Americanos!" shouted the victorious gauchos.

"Death to the Americanos! Plata will yet have revenge!" shouted a hoarse voice from the woods.

"It was Plata himself who uttered that shout!" cried the chief of the gauchos.

Then he led a part of his followers into the woods in pursuit of the escaping robbers and Corrajo went with them.

But they returned without overtaking Plata and those who had escaped from the Pampas with him.

A few moments later one of the gauchos shouted as though in alarm:

"A stampede of wild cattle! They are coming down upon us!"

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE STAMPEDE OF WILD CATTLE—THE WILD HORSE HUNTERS' CAMP.

THE thrilling shout of the gaucho caused the heart of every one within the sound of his voice to leap with apprehension.

A sound as of distant thunder seemed to shake the earth, and coming from the eastward rushed a vast phalanx of horns.

Thousands of wild cattle were racing over the pampas toward our friends in a wild stampede.

The affrighted roaring and bellowing of the mighty herd was mingled with the thunder of hoofs, and they came like a troop of cavalry threatening to sweep everything before them.

Like white silhouettes against a dark background of sky gleamed the white horns of the maddened herd, and those weapons, given them by nature, seemed as terrible as leveled bayonets at a charge.

Before the herd flocks of birds flew away beating the air with trembling wings, and adding their shrill, screaming cries to the menacing din.

The captured pampas robbers had been bound with lassoes, and the members of the diamond train who were indebted to the timely attack of the explorers and the gauchos for their preservation, were expressing their gratitude when the alarm was given.

"Quick! To the timber or we shall be beaten down and trampled into the pampas!" yelled the gaucho chief.

None needed this alarming admonition, and there was no hesitation or delay.

The gauchos hurried their prisoners toward the shelter, and the diamond train followed them. The great Spanish spurs were plied mercilessly, and the pack mules were lashed frantically.

The explorers sprang into the electric carriage, and the great metal horse dashed away for the timber.

And closer and closer came the mighty herd. Above all other sounds rang out the affrighted cries of the mule drivers and the yells of the gauchos.

It seemed that the mule train was doomed, and observing their peril, Mr. Reade, Sr., gave the word and the rear break on the electric carriage was worked, while he turned the metal horse, and the carriage swung round, presenting its broadside toward the wild cattle between them and the diamond train.

Frank, Jr., then discharged the electric battery of Winchesters thrice in quick succession.

The destructive fusillade heaped the foremost of the herd in a dead and wounded mass upon the pampas, forming a momentary obstruction in the way of the wild cattle.

Their advance was checked for a few seconds at that particular point, and the diamond train reached the timber close behind the gauchos and their prisoners.

The Electric Horse and carriage was also run in among the trees.

The vast herd came crashing against the first barrier of trees, as though they were assaulting the natural fortress of the fugitives, but while some of them went crashing through the timber, the majority of the herd swept along the confines of the wood to the northward.

Two of the gauchos were overthrown, and one of the horses belonging to the diamond train was gored and killed, but the few of the wild herd that gained the timber dashed away into the adjacent stream, and the Electric Horse and carriage escaped injury.

Then the cause of the stampede was discovered.

Afar, through the gathering gloom of the coming night, was seen a dull red glow extending afar on the great plains.

"The pampas are on fire!" cried the gauchos. Nearer and nearer swept the conflagration, as the brighter glow of the crimson destroyer proclaimed.

The yellow grass, sun-dried until it burned readily, was devoured by the flames with the speed of the wind.

"We must start a back fire, as they do at home on our own vast western plains!" cried Frank, Jr.

Then he quickly got out some of his fire balls, and Corrajo taking them ran along the edge of the woods and discharged them fixed upon arrows from his great bow at a distance into the grass, which caught fire readily and burst into flame.

Meanwhile the gauchos quickly prepared more fire-balls in their own peculiar way.

They secured the inner lining of the pampas thistles which grew along the edge of the timber, and soaked it in oil as they formed great wads which would burn strongly for a time.

The gauchos ran out upon the pampas and threw their fire wads into the grass in a long line, and fanned the flames with their pouches, making them stream like gayly colored bannerets in the night wind.

The back fire was a success. The flames kindled by the united efforts of the explorers and their allies, and fanned toward the approaching conflagration until they freely took that course ran to meet the other line of fire.

Soon the opposing columns of the conflagration, met, and like destroyed like in one mad burst of lurid light.

And thus the exciting peril passed.

Some hours later the Electric Horse and carriage, accompanied by the gauchos, who stated that their camp was not far distant, was returning on its course, while the diamond train, no longer fearing the vanquished robbers, resumed its way.

The explorers and their friends were soon back to the place where the gauchos had left their horses, and when the latter had mounted, and while they drove the captured robbers before them the party continued on in the direction of the gauchos' camp.

As it was not necessary to diverge from the direct route toward the Purus river in order to do so, the explorers resolved to visit the encampment of the gauchos.

The latter informed them that they were engaged in capturing wild horses and breaking them.

The camp of the horse-hunters was reached in safety, and it was found to be situated near the junction of the tablelands and the wooded plains of the Amazon country.

A number of rude huts had been erected, and a large corral inclosed by posts from the nearest woods. The inclosure was for the reception of the captured wild horses, and when the party arrived there were nearly a hundred horses in the corral, and not one of them had ever had a man on his back.

After a night's rest, which was preceded by a feast of juicy pampas beef, roasted with the skin on, after the native method, so as to retain all the flavor and nutriment, the explorers felt refreshed. But that night Frank, Jr., was suddenly awakened by the doctor, who started up in his sleep, disturbed by a troubled dream, exclaiming:

"At last! Ah, I have discovered the secret of the cipher-cube!"

"What's the matter, doctor?" cried Frank.

The old naturalist awoke with a start.

"Eh? Ah, did you call?" he asked, rubbing his eyes and surprised to find himself sitting up-right on his bunk in the electric carriage.

"Yes. You were talking in your sleep."

"It was a dream. I am sorry I disturbed you. I was dreaming about the ancient cipher," replied the doctor.

Then he lay down again, and Frank turned over and went to sleep at once.

In the morning the gaucho chief announced that his followers were about to break some of the wild horses which were confined in the corral, and our explorers accompanied them to the stockade, where they witnessed a novel sight, and one which was interesting and exciting.

The door of the corral was opened, and three of the gauchos dashed in among the herd of wild horses, which, at their appearance, snorted in fright, and dashed about the inclosure seeking to escape.

Singling out one of the herd, a gaucho made a skillful cast of his lasso and dropped his never-failing noose over the animal's head.

The captured steed gave a tremendous bound into the air, but the trained horse, ridden by the gaucho, braced himself, and the captive was held. Then another gaucho, as the wild horse

reared again, cast a lasso about his forefeet and brought him to the ground.

"A saddle and bridle were placed upon the thrown horse by the third gaucho, while the others held the madly struggling animal. Then the man who had cast the first lasso leaped from his own steed, and mounted the captive, which was immediately liberated, and permitted to dash out of the inclosure, the doors being quickly closed behind him, while his comrades prevented the escape of others of the herd.

Snorting, bounding and kicking, while the gaucho plied the spurs and retained his seat in the saddle as though he was a part of the animal, the wild horse rushed away and he was ridden furiously until, exhausted and covered with sweat, he finally submitted and was ridden back to the corral by his captor in triumph.

But meanwhile during the visit of the explorers to the camp of the horse-hunters a singular meeting took place upon the banks of the stream, some miles from where Plata, the robber chief, and those of his band who escaped from the gauchos sought refuge.

The old Ticunas chief who recognized the cipher-cube accompanied by the half-breed Portuguese, and some twenty native warriors encountered Plata and his men.

The half-breed Portuguese had formerly been a member of the band of pampas marauders commanded by Plata, and they met in the most friendly manner and made mutual explanations.

Plata longed for vengeance upon the Americans, and a compact was made between him and the half-breed whereby it was agreed they should unite their forces and make a common cause against the explorers.

This accidental meeting was the harbinger of future trouble for our friends.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE INDIA-RUBBER GUM GATHERERS—THE ELECTRIC HORSE BREAKS DOWN.

The explorers took leave of the gauchos the following day. Before they began their journey toward the Purus river, which they believed to be the locality indicated by the arrow on the mysterious map of the cipher-cube, again, they told the gaucho chief of the determined pursuit of them made by the old Ticunas chief, but they said nothing about the object of that pursuit.

The leader of the gauchos assured the explorers that he did not think the Ticunas natives would follow them further, saying:

"The Ticunas will fear to venture so far from their own country on the Amazon, I think, and the rainy season is coming, when the low lands will be inundated, and their retreat will be cut off by the flood unless they take the back trail now. No, no, you need fear the Ticunas no more."

The explorers were quite reassured, overlooking the circumstance that they had not told of the most powerful incentive which the Ticunas had to brave every peril and assume any risk in order to defeat them.

Toward the close of the first day's journey from the camp of the horse-hunters, the explorers were proceeding along a wooded track upon the open plains, and the Electric Horse was running at a moderate rate of speed, when Corrajo's keen sense of hearing detected certain peculiar sounds in the wood, which led him to infer that men were near.

He called upon his comrades to listen, and very soon they all heard the sounds of wood-choppers.

"Men are surely cutting timber in the woods," said Frank, Jr.

"No doubt of that. Ah, yonder is a caoutchouc grove. Now I know who the choppers we hear are, and what they are doing," said Corrajo with an intelligent look.

"Fat are they doin'? Be gob is it white min—as yez call the yellow civilized South Americans—that come away out here fur fire-wood I donno?" said Barney.

"Course not. You've got no sense. De men in de woods muss be after quinine I done tole yer," replied Pomp.

"Is it mesel' as would be axin' inflammation av' a nagur?"

"Doan' you call me names, Irish," retorted Pomp.

"The men in the woods are caoutchouc gatherers I am sure. The elastic gum is a valuable product," said Corrajo.

"And the scientific name of the tree from which it is derived is *siphonia elastica*," the naturalist added.

Just then several Brazilians, hardy-looking, adventurous fellows, came out of the woods.

Corrajo hailed them, and some conversation ensued. The Brazilians at first hesitated about

approaching the Electric Horse, but they were soon reassured.

Drawing nearer they informed the explorers that they were, as Corrajo inferred, caoutchouc-gatherers, and that they were encamped in the timber.

Frank, Jr., and Corrajo accepted an invitation to witness the work of the India-rubber gum gatherers, and they accompanied them into the woods, while the electric conveyance was halted to await their return.

"The India-rubber trees are becoming less every year, but these interior forests, especially along the affluents of the Amazon, still contain a good number," said one of the Brazilians.

Arriving at the working ground of the gum-gatherers, the young inventor and his comrade saw about a score of men employed in collecting the rubber gum.

Incisions were made in the trees, and the sap was allowed to flow into small jars or pots. The sap is allowed to stand, and it forms into a coagulum.

Every one knows that when manufactured the gum is of great commercial importance; its elasticity and flexibility, its insolubility to water, and its impenetrability to gasses and fluids in general makes it very valuable.

Frank, Jr., accepted some of the gum in its crude state, and returned the gift by presenting the Brazilian with some tobacco.

When he had satisfied his curiosity about the method of obtaining India rubber gum he and Corrajo returned to the Electric Horse, and a start was made again.

The next day, as the electric conveyance was moving very rapidly over rather rough ground, there was a sudden shock and jar, and the machine stopped suddenly.

The occupants of the electric vehicle were overthrown, and they knew something about the machinery must have broken.

"Bedad! it's busted the ould horse has at last!" cried Barney, picking himself up.

"Yes, something has given way," assented Mr. Reade, Sr., while Frank, Jr., added in an anxious tone:

"I hope the damage is such as we can repair."

"If not we are in a bad fix," remarked the doctor.

"Golly! what if de Injines should come down on we uns now!" exclaimed Pomp.

Frank and his father immediately set about making an examination of the machinery.

The door in the belly of the metal horse was opened, and the wonderful and intricate machinery in the interior was duly inspected by Frank, Jr., while his father opened the door to the battery, and exposed the machinery and galvanic apparatus there.

"Ah!" cried Frank, Jr., presently. "I've found out the difficulty, the right-hand driving-rod, connecting with the mammoth watchwork machinery is broken, and the upper tier of cog-wheels are out of gear."

"A serious accident, Frank, a very bad break down," said Mr. Reade, Sr.

"Yes. But though it will take time, and the main driving-rod must be welded, I think we can repair everything," replied Frank, hopefully.

"But you certainly have not the implements you require for welding iron?" said the doctor, in surprise.

"That's just what we have. Come, Barney and Pomp, bestir yourselves, and get out the portable bellows, blacksmith's furnace and anvil," answered Frank, Jr., cheerfully.

Then, to the doctor's surprise, a neat portable outfit for a smithy, such as is used in the army and carried by traveling circuses, that the horses may be shod on the road or a broken van repaired, though far from a town, was produced from the locker.

While Barney and Pomp set up the movable blacksmith shop, and Frank and his father removed the broken bar, and the cogs which had been thrown out of place, Corrajo took his gun and sauntered off in quest of game.

There was no timber near, but a thicket of pampas thistles, which are the dread of man and beast alike. They grow to a great size, and are armed with terrible needle-pointed spines. The thistle-thickets abound on many parts of the pampas, and they are traversed by cattle-paths. Many wild cattle perish among them. Having strayed from a path, they are driven deeper and deeper into the labyrinths by the sharp points of the spine, which cut like a knife, and finally they become bewildered and perish of starvation, or are slain by wild beasts.

Corrajo knew that game was usually to be found along the thistle paths, and arriving at the confines of the vast thicket he entered a narrow cattle-trail, which he soon discovered.

But though the gaucho penetrated for a con-

siderable distance into the cattle path, and wandered about from trail to trail in the midst of the thistle growth, which arose above his head and excluded all view of the pampas beyond, he failed to discover any sort of game worth shooting.

He had started to leave the thistle forest, when all at once his footsteps were arrested.

A sound which thrilled and startled him reached his hearing.

It was the sound of men's voices close at hand in the thicket.

Corrajo also heard the sound of footsteps.

"Some one comes. I must not be discovered until I learn the character of the parties I am to meet," muttered the gaucho.

Then he crouched down behind a clump of thistles.

In a moment or so two men came in sight, walking along a path which would lead them by the gaucho's hiding place.

At a glance Corrajo recognized these men.

They were the half-breed Portuguese who had followed the explorers so long with the Ticunas savages, and one of Plata's band of pampas desperadoes.

The fact was, while the majority of the native army had turned back at the Amazon, the oath-bound chiefs and the half-breed had pressed on alone, and by daylight escaped the submarine torpedoes and crossed the river, to subsequently meet the half-breeds' old leader, Plata, as recorded.

As the two outlaws drew nearer, Corrajo heard some of them say:

"Bravo! We have them now. The Americanos' infernal horse has broken down and they cannot run away!"

"Yes, and we will return to the band, and when darkness comes we will attack the Americanos. Not one shall escape!"

"The greatest peril of all menaces us now," thought Corrajo.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE DOCTOR'S DREAM—A THISTLE STOCKADE—THE ENEMY IN SIGHT.

THE two pampas pirates passed by Corrajo's place of concealment without seeing him, and they were soon out of sight.

Then the gaucho made haste to go back to the Electric Horse.

Meanwhile, as the others busied themselves in making preparations for repairing the broken machinery, the old doctor seemed to fall into a reverie, and as Frank, Jr., had noticed that ever since they left the camp of the gauchos Dr. Vaneyke had seemed strangely preoccupied mentally, observing him now, he asked:

"What are you reflecting about, doctor? I've noticed you seem to be in a brown study most of the time lately."

The old naturalist smiled.

"Well, the truth is, Frank, I've been thinking a great deal of late about the dream I had at the gauchos' camp," he said.

"Oh, I remember! That was when you talked about the cipher in your sleep."

"Yes. That dream has made a deep impression on my mind. I am half inclined to believe there is something in it."

"I've very little faith in the meaning of dreams. But what was your vision?" said Frank, Jr.

"I dreamt that I had discovered the secret of the cipher cube, and read the strange writing."

"So I inferred from what you said in your sleep. But how did you think you made the great discovery?"

"I dreamt that I was climbing up a steep mountain, and that I had the cipher-cube in my hand, and that it slipped from my grasp and fell upon the rocks far below. Then in my dream I descended to the place where the cube had fallen, and found it broken into fragments, and among the pieces of the cube which were strewn about I found a parchment which contained the key that enabled me to read the cipher, as I then did from the copy which you know I made of the inscription on the cube long ago," said the doctor.

"And what did you make out the cipher to read?" asked Frank, Jr., eagerly.

"From that point my dream became confused, and I have been trying ever since to recollect it, but I have failed to do so."

"That's bad. If you could only recollect the most important part of the dream we might test its truth."

"So I was thinking."

"Golly! I've done tole yer dreams am all right if yer know how to make them out. Yes, sah, I done dreamt Barney would drink de doctor's medicine fo' whisky, an' he done do it, suah," said Pomp grinning.

"An' begob, I had a dream, too," said Barney readily.

"What did yer dream?" asked Pomp.

"That I hit a nagur a belt on the side av the head that keeled him over, an' it's come true, be-dad."

As Barney spoke he gave Pomp a rap that did cause him to drop.

"That's fur the pizen, bad seran to yez!" the Irishman cried.

But Pomp was on his feet in a moment and tried to butt Barney. The Irishman evaded him and they clinched and went down, rolling over and over in the grass.

One of Barney's legs flew up, and striking the doctor, caused him to fall upon him and Pomp. Frank, Jr., ran to help the doctor up, when stumbling he too fell upon the others, and while they all scrambled about, Mr. Reade, Sr., laughed until his sides ached at the ludicrous scene.

Just then Corrajo came running up.

"Danger!" he cried. "The enemy is near!"

"What enemy?" asked Frank, Jr., regaining his feet.

"The Ticunas, the Portuguese, and Plata and his robbers," answered Corrajo.

Barney and Pomp scrambled up.

The startling news brought by the gaucho made them forget their little "disagreement."

"Where are the nagurs and the robbers?" cried Barney, running for his shillalah.

In a few words Corrajo related the conversation which he had overheard in the thistle jungle.

"What is to be done? The machinery cannot be repaired in less than a day and night," said Mr. Reade, Sr.

"And we cannot set up the furnace and forge inside the carriage," cried Frank, Jr.

"It's the worst ruccion of all that's comin' now. Oim thinkin'," remarked Barney.

"This is a terrible dilemma," said the doctor.

"But I'll tell you how we may be able to stand a short siege, and hold the enemy at bay while the work of repairing the machinery goes on," said Corrajo.

"How do you mean?" asked Frank, Jr., eagerly.

"We must hasten to construct a corral."

"But of what?"

"Thistles. There is plenty of them yonder," replied Corrajo, pointing.

"Then not a moment is to be lost. Show me how to build the thistle stockade," said Mr. Reade, Sr.

"I will do so. Get your hatchets, all, and follow me. The sun is declining, and every instant counts," said Corrajo.

Frank, Jr., rushed to the electric carriage, and quickly got out half a dozen hatchets.

The men each took one, and then they all hastened to the thistle thicket.

"The sharp spines of the thistles will enable us to form of them a barricade which the enemy will find it difficult to pass," said Corrajo.

As soon as the party reached the thistles, directed by Corrajo, they began cutting down the tall plants whose stems were as large as a man's arm, and quite stout.

A great quantity was cut and made into bundles, which were bound with ropes and dragged back to the electric carriage.

Then the great bundles of thistles were built up into a wall, three bundles deep, one on the top of the other, until a wall six feet high was constructed about the Electric Horse and the blacksmithing outfit.

But the electric carriage was placed in the middle of the stockade, and opposite the port-holes of the electric battery of Winchester rifles loopholes were made in the thistle wall.

Believing that they were working for their lives, the party labored with surprising rapidity.

Several hours were occupied in constructing the barricade, and finally as the shades of night were falling it was completed.

The explorers had been in great fear all the afternoon that the enemy might discover what they were doing, and make an attack before the stockade was completed, and they were very grateful for the respite which enabled them to complete the thistle barricade uninterrupted.

Corrajo thought it must be that the two scouts of the enemy, whom he had discovered in the thistle jungle, must have been a long distance in advance of the main band.

This was the fact, and it took the two outlaws all the afternoon to return to their party, for it chanced that they lost their way in the labyrinth of cattle-paths among the thistles, and were some time in finding the right trail again.

But they finally reached Plata and his followers, and communicated the news that the Electric Horse had broken down.

As the shades of night were falling the united forces of the pampas robbers and the Indians

were hastening forward toward the Electric

Horse as swiftly as possible, guided by the two scouts who had brought the news of the accident that had befallen the conveyance of the explorers.

Some hours after nightfall our friends discovered the enemy advancing over the pampas to attack them.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

OUT OF THE THISTLE FORT—STOPPED BY A FLOOD—PURSUED.

CORRAJO was first to discover the approach of the enemy, and he called the attention of the others to them as they advanced under the bright moonlight.

"Bedad, they'll be surprised a bit, Oim thinkin', whin they see the thistle fort. The blackguards 'ull mate a sharp welcome at the points av the thistles, Oim bettin', begorra," said Barney.

"Gollie! If dem fellows go fer to 'tack de fort da will come to de scratch sure," said Pomp.

Frank and his father were busily engaged at the forge repairing the broken machinery. Barney was working the bellows and causing the sea-coal fire of the forge to burn brightly. With sturdy blows, which sounded a chorus of anvil-chimes, Frank was beating the glowing iron, and Mr. Reade, Sr., and Pomp were readjusting the cog-wheels from the machinery of the Electric Horse.

The explorers had brought with them several bushels of sea-coal to be used in the fire of the forge, and so there was nothing wanting to make the smithy complete.

The scene within the thistle stockade was a peaceful, pastoral one, suggestive of a quiet village smithy, far away in the imperiled adventurers' beloved native land.

"As it is necessary that every moment should be improved, and that there should be no cessation in the work of repairing our machinery, while the rest of you defend the stockade Frank and I will keep on with our work," said Mr. Reade, Sr.

"Yes," assented Frank, Jr., "Barney understands all about working the electric battery of Winchesters, upon which we place most reliance for our defense."

"Faith, I do that, an' it's illigant ruccion O'll give the nagurs whin they come within range av the 'lectric guns, bedad!" replied Barney, and he took his place in the carriage, so as to be prepared to open fire upon the enemy.

Corrajo, Pomp and Dr. Vaneyke, who now declared he felt about as well as ever, took their rifles and stationed themselves at loop-holes in the thistle wall.

Pomp, the black dead shot, meant to show his skill as a sharpshooter now.

Meanwhile the enemy had advanced steadily until they discovered the thistle fortification erected about the Electric Horse and carriage.

But, comprehending the plan of defense decided upon by the explorers as soon as they saw the barricade, the savages and the pampas robbers halted.

A number of yells, indicative of the anger and surprise of the enemy, reached the hearing of the party in the stockade.

Very prudently the band had halted beyond rifle-range from the Electric Horse, and although Pomp discharged his rifle, while he uttered a ringing shout of defiance, his bullet fell short.

The enemy numbered some thirty-odd men, and of these about one-third were Plata's band of pampas pirates.

The attacking party consulted for some moments, and then divided and began a wary approach from the two sides of the plains opposite the port-holes of the Winchester rifle battery.

When about in range they suddenly made a determined charge, uttering wild, fierce yells, which were intended to intimidate the besieged.

Then Barney discharged the electric rifle battery, and the enemy retreated. But in a moment they rallied and charged the sides of the fortification which were not protected by the electric rifle battery.

Then Frank and his father seized their guns, and with Barney who came from his post in the carriage, they opened fire from one side while the others discharged volley after volley from the opposite side.

Again the enemy was driven back, but the arrows of the savages and the bullets of the pampas robbers penetrated the walls of the stockade in more than one instance.

A cessation of hostilities ensued, and the besieged thought the enemy was holding a counsel to devise some way of defeating them.

Frank and his father resumed work on the

broken machinery as soon as the attack was repulsed.

Some time elapsed. The night was passing and day would soon dawn. The sky was darkening, as it often does before daybreak, and the movements of the enemy could not be very distinctly seen.

But all at once the pampas was discovered on fire, and the enemy were seen fanning the flames with their pouches until they ran toward the stockade.

"They mean to burn us out," cried the doctor. "Open the water-tank in the carriage, Pomp! It contains many gallons of water, and we can soak the sides of the thistle barricade so that all the fire on the pampas can't make them burn!" cried Frank, Jr.

The darky uttered a delighted shout and hastened to obey Frank, Jr.

In a moment the water-tank was opened, and every member of the party seized a bucket or utensil of some kind, and began to dash the contents of the tank upon the thistle wall.

It was soon soaked through, and when the flames of the burning pampas reached the drenched wall, they made no impression on it, and licking up every spear of grass the red destroyer fled on beyond the Electric Horse and the barricade, leaving it standing like a green oasis, in the midst of a black desert.

The disappointment of the enemy may be imagined, and as they formed a circle about the pampas-fort and seemed making preparations to camp, our friends concluded they intended to try to starve them out.

And so the night passed and the following day.

Meanwhile the work of repairing the machinery went on. It was found that several small bars and rods which had at first been overlooked were broken and bent, besides the main-rod and the portions of the machinery heretofore mentioned.

Now and then Pomp or Corrajo picked off a savage who ventured within range.

Toward the close of day Plata, the robber chief, advanced in person with a white poucho for a flag of truce, and demanded the surrender of the explorers.

Directed by Frank, Jr., Corrajo told the outlaw that he would give him just two minutes to get out of range or be riddled with bullets.

Plata retreated uttering direful threats. But the explorers were very hopeful now.

Frank, Jr., announced that three hours more of steady work would enable them to complete the repairing of the machinery, and then they would be ready for a start again.

The three hours passed and then the machinery was all intact once more and in place.

It was tested and found to work as well as before.

"Now, then, for a start that will surprise the rascals, who feel sure of starving us out, no doubt!" said Mr. Reade, Sr., when everything was ready.

"Yes. All aboard!" cried Frank, Jr., cheerfully.

In a trice the entire party had taken their places in the interior of the vehicle. The sides were down, and Mr. Reade, Sr., was at the engineer's stand.

"Now, then, away we go!" cried Frank, Jr., and then his father turned the main lever, and the electric current leaped along the connecting rods to the machinery of the great metal horse, starting everything in motion.

The metal steed went crashing straight through one of the thistle walls, and the attached vehicle followed it.

Away sped the modern wonder of mechanical invention.

Frank, Jr., set the electric bell ringing loudly, and the little band rent the air with loud hurrahs as they dashed through the scattered line of their foes.

Bullets and arrows were discharged by the latter, but they were turned aside by the iron plate that protected the carriage.

All that night the electric conveyance continued steadily onward, and Corrajo, when day dawned, said that he thought a twenty-four hours' further run would bring them to the banks of the Purus river.

The character of the landscape had undergone a change. The tablelands or pampas were left behind, and the low lands, which foretold the proximity of a river valley were reached.

In the early morning the rain began to fall in torrents, and Corrajo, after taking an observation ahead through the telescope, said that he feared one of those great floods which often occur in the valley of the Amazon and its affluents was at hand.

"The floating islands and immense quantities of debris swept from the banks of these rivers

when the water is high, frequently dams up the channels and cause sudden overflows, which submerge large tracts of country. The floods often subside as soon as they come on, owing to the giving way of the natural dams which causes them," said Corrajo.

Before noon, much to the annoyance of the explorers, a discovery was made which verified the gaucho's fears.

Through the telescope Frank, Jr., saw that a wide tract of bottom-land lying low in the valley of the Purus was covered with water. It looked like a great lake.

The rain still fell without sign of abatement, and as they could not think of proceeding further until the flood subsided, the explorers halted.

The electric carriage was a protection against the rain, and when water-proof curtains, with which the perforated sides were supplied, were pulled down, the carriage was as dry as the occupants of it could wish.

The rain-storm, which extended over a large portion of the territory, was hailed with delight by the explorers' foes.

"Ah! we have not lost them yet," cried Plata, the robber chief; "they are shaping their course for the Purus river, and there is almost sure to be an overflow in the valley of that stream, which will delay the Americanos if the rain lasts. Come, we will not abandon the trail of these foreign intruders."

Then the band once more started forward, following the tracks of the Electric Horse.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE SECRET OF THE CUBE—THE ANCIENT CIPHER READ.

MEANWHILE, at such moments as he could devote to reflection Frank, Jr., had been considering Dr. Vaneyke's singular dream about the ancient cipher cube.

While they were waiting for the flood in the valley, which prevented their further advance, to subside, Frank, Jr., suddenly exclaimed:

"It's worth a trial!"

"What is?" asked the doctor.

"An idea about the cipher cube which has just struck me."

"Let's have it."

"Well, I've been considering your dream, and I believe, after all, it has a meaning."

"Yes, yes; and you have interpreted the meaning of the dream, you think?"

"Possibly so. You remember in your dream, when the cube was broken, you found the parchment containing the key to the cipher?"

"Just so," assented the doctor.

"Very good. Now, where did that parchment come from, think you, supposing the dream to be a reality?"

The doctor started to his feet.

"Truly I believe you have hit upon the secret. The parchment may reasonably be supposed to have been concealed in the cube itself," he cried.

"That's my idea exactly, doctor. The cube may be hollow," said Frank, Jr.

"But I've sounded it and failed to detect any hollow sound."

"Still it may be hollow. The interior may be filled with the parchment containing the key to the cipher."

"You can soon decide the question. The doctor has made an exact copy of the cipher and map on the cube, and so the preservation of the cube is of no importance," said Mr. Reade, Sr.

"That's a fact. We will try to break the cipher-cube," said Frank, Jr.

"All right," assented the doctor.

Then he produced the ancient cube.

Frank got out one of the forge hammers and placed the cube on the forge anvil.

Then, while in intense interest all watched him, the young inventor proceeded to deal the cube a number of heavy blows.

Suddenly the cube parted in the middle and was smoothly divided into two equal portions, as though it had been secured together by means of some strong cement which lapse of time had rendered almost as hard as the cube itself.

Then an exultant shout escaped Frank, Jr.'s, lips, as he saw that in the center of the cube there was a small hollow space exactly square, which was completely filled with a package of closely folded parchment.

"Found! Your dream is about to be verified, doctor!" cried Frank, Jr.

Then he extricated the tightly wedged package of parchment from the hollow in the cube, and handed it to the doctor.

The old naturalist's hands trembled with excitement as he received it, and he hurriedly opened the closely folded packet and spread it out under the light of an electric lamp.

The parchment was very thin and of the finest

texture, and when it was unfolded all were surprised at its large size.

The sheet was covered with closely written columns of strange signs, and opposite each one of those signs was written a Spanish word for which it stood.

There were about three hundred signs traced on the two sides of the parchment in very fine characters, and these corresponded to the same number of Spanish words.

At a glance the doctor recognized the characters which composed the cipher on the ancient cube among those on the parchment, and then he knew that at last the key to the cipher was in his possession.

"Yes. Your idea has proven correct, Frank. The mystery of the cipher shall now be solved," said the doctor.

"Golly! Den we'uns kin done foun' de treasure suah," cried Pomp.

"Right yez are, Pomp, an' it's mesel' and the likes av yez as will be no poorer for makin' this trip, be dad," said Barney.

Then the doctor took a pencil and traced the cipher of the cube on a piece of blank paper.

Then he proceeded to write out the Spanish words corresponding to these strange hieroglyphics, and when he had found them all from the parchment cipher-key, and translated them into English the cipher read as follows:

"The gold treasure of old sacred temple from Lima is concealed under great third finger by Sun mountains Brazil, and in sealed mine, black ledges, Peru."

The doctor had noticed that in the cipher the same character did not occur more than once, and now he saw that in the translation there was no repetition of any word.

When he had completed the translation of the cipher from the Spanish to English the doctor read it aloud.

"Ah, now I think I can guide you straight to 'the great third finger by Sun mountains.' That is the spot indicated by the arrow drawn on the map of Brazil near the Purus river," said Corrajo.

"But what is the great third finger?" asked Frank, Jr.

"Among the hills of the range called by the natives 'Sun Mountain' in the olden times, there is a singular rock formation, extending out from the highest peak in the form of three stone fingers," replied Corrajo.

"And under the greatest of those fingers, the part of the lost treasure of the Peruvians secreted in Brazil is buried. No doubt the old Peruvians selected that site for the hiding place of their treasure when they fled from Peru to escape Pizarro and his conquistadores," said Frank.

"And they thought the wonderful natural landmark would enable them to find the treasure again," remarked Mr. Reade, Sr.

"Do you know the location of the 'black ledges in Peru' where another portion of the lost treasure is concealed in a sealed mine, according to the cipher?" asked the doctor of Corrajo.

"Oh, yes. The ledges are in the Andes. The second arrow on the map, drawn from the cube, shows their site I am sure, and the dotted lines traced between the two arrows, the one in Brazil and the other in Peru is, I infer, an indication of the best route to take from one to the other."

"Even without the cipher the sight of the two arrows would have guided me to the localities of the hidden treasures, but we might not find them without the more precise directions of the cipher," Corrajo continued.

"Well, we are certainly fortunate. I suppose it will always remain a mystery who the owner of the cipher cube was, though he may be presumed to have been one of the old Franciscans," said Mr. Reade, Sr.

"It don't matter much about who the owner of the ancient treasure secret was," said Frank, Jr.

"No. The race to whom the gold belonged has passed away. The Spaniards and their descendants of Peru have no rightful claim to it," said the doctor.

"If we find it we have as good a right to it as any one, I think," Frank, Jr. remarked.

"Certainly," assented the doctor.

"Badad finders are kapers in this case," said Barney.

"But if the authorities of Peru or Brazil should find out we meant to remove a treasure, they would take measures to prevent our doing so," said Mr. Reade, Sr.

"There is not the least bit of doubt of that," replied Frank.

"If we get possession of the treasure, we must guard our secret until we are safely out of the country," said the doctor.

"These South Americans have a habit of im-

prisoning foreigners in their dungeons upon slight provocation," Mr. Reade, Sr., said.

Just then Corrajo, who had been listening intently for some moments, suddenly exclaimed:

"Listen! I think I hear voices."

Night was at hand now, and Corrajo peered through the openings in the side of the carriage through the gloaming.

Then he laughed, as he said:

"It was the cry of an avellet monkey, but it had a human sound. I see a number of the animals in a neighboring grove, and I think I'll go and try a shot at them. They are the best eating in the world."

"No monkey-meat, thanks," said Frank, Jr. But Corrajo wanted some himself, for, in common with his class, he regarded the avellet as desirable game, and so he left the carriage with his rifle.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE DECOY—AN AMBUSH—THE PORTUGUESE IN THE ELECTRIC CARRIAGE.

CORRAJO had been absent an hour or more, when he returned, bringing with him an avellet monkey, which he dressed after the gaucho fashion.

Travelers who have tasted the flesh of the animal when roasted affirm it resembles the finest lamb. But our friends were not inclined to sample it, and Corrajo had it all to himself.

The night passed, and also the succeeding day, and though the rain ceased to fall, the water that inundated the river valley did not subside.

Toward dawn, the second night, the rush and roar of waters which were suddenly heard by the explorers warned them that the dam which had been formed in the channel of the river and occasioned the overflow had given way at last.

When daylight came again the party in the electric carriage saw that the water in the flooded valley was fast receding.

After the morning meal Frank, Jr., Corrajo and Pomp took their guns, and went in quest of wild ducks which were discovered by the sharp-eyed gaucho, afar.

The three hunters soon passed out of sight, and a couple of hours went by.

Suddenly those who remained in the carriage were startled and alarmed by a shout from an adjacent thicket.

"Help! help! help!"

This was the cry heard by our friends.

"That's Master Frank's voice!" cried Barney, and seizing his gun he sprang out of the carriage and ran toward the timber whence the cry for help emanated.

In their solicitude for the safety of Frank, Jr., Mr. Reade, Sr., and Dr. Vaneyke hastily followed Barney without pausing to consider that they were leaving the Electric Horse and carriage unguarded.

As the party rushed out of sight into the thicket to which the shouts for help had drawn them, a man who was crawling toward the electric carriage under cover of the tall grass, from the opposite direction, arose to his feet, and, bounding forward, he quickly reached the electric carriage.

This man was the half-breed Portuguese who was leagued with the explorers' enemies.

Opening the door of the electric carriage the renegade leaped into the vehicle.

"Ha! my ruse has succeeded. Now then to destroy the battery by means of which the machine is run. Plata, who was educated in his youth, explained to me that all the power of the metal horse comes from what he called an electric battery. He described the same, and told me to find it and destroy it. Then the Americanos, even if they escape the ambush into which they have been decoyed, cannot get away," said the Portuguese half-breed.

He began a search for the battery, and he soon found the upper one. Then, securing one of the sledges belonging to the blacksmithing outfit, the rascal went on to demolish the battery.

He did not desist from this work until he had ruined the battery so that it could never be repaired.

Then, chuckling at his success, he leaped from the vehicle and made for the thicket whence he had come.

Meanwhile Frank, Jr.'s, friends had been cruelly deceived.

Their enemies had arrived in the vicinity some time previously, and having resolved upon resorting to a ruse to capture the explorers they concealed their presence.

From the shelter of the thicket they witnessed the departure of Frank, Jr., and his comrades when they went in quest of game, and while a part of the band set out to follow the hunters, intending to attack them at a distance from the electric carriage, the others remained to decoy

Mr. Reade, Sr., and those with him into an ambush.

Plata, the chief of the pampas robbers, was an excellent mimic, and while the Portuguese set out to crawl to the electric vehicle, the robber leader imitated the voice of Frank, Jr., and shouted for help.

We have seen that Plata's imitation of Frank, Jr.'s, voice was so accurate that his friends were completely deceived by it.

But they had not penetrated far into the thicket when with wild fierce yells their foes, who lay in ambush there, sprang up all about them.

A desperate hand to hand encounter ensued.

Barney proved himself a real hero, and for some moments he performed feats of the most desperate valor.

Mr. Reade, Sr., and Dr. Vaneyke, despite their years, made a desperate resistance, but it seemed the little party was about to be overwhelmed, when all at once, with ringing shouts, help came.

Frank, Jr., Corrajo and Pomp, burst through the bushes and rushed upon the enemy.

At some distance from the electric conveyance, the cunning Corrajo had discovered that his party were followed by their old enemy.

In whispers he then communicated the startling fact to his comrades, and warned them not to betray that they knew of the presence of the foe.

Then led by Corrajo, Frank, Jr., and Pomp entered a dense thicket.

Making a swift detour, they doubled on their tracks and came hastening back toward the electric conveyance, while the enemy was looking for them in the thicket in which they had disappeared.

The timely arrival of Frank, Jr. and his two comrades created a diversion, and the reunited friends made a charge and fought their way out of the timber.

Then they ran for the electric carriage. As they emerged from the thicket the Portuguese reached his colleagues, and assured them he had destroyed the battery.

Plata at the reception of this news uttered a triumphant yell, and shouted after the retreating explorers:

"Your electric battery is destroyed! You cannot move your conveyance. Ha, ha! We shall starve you out this time! The Americanos have been outwitted!"

Our friends reached the electric carriage, and then they saw that the upper battery, which was ordinarily used, was in ruins.

"Have they demolished the concealed battery, too, thank you," cried Dr. Vaneyke.

"No," replied Frank, Jr., as he opened the secret door to the concealed battery and saw it was intact.

"Now to make the attachments by means of which the power of the concealed battery may be utilized," he added.

This was quickly done.

But just as the vehicle was about to start, the enemy, reinforced by the party that had pursued Frank, Jr. and his friends advanced, and then a sudden charge was made at the carriage.

"Now we'll surprise them!" cried Frank, Jr.

Then he turned on a full head of electricity from the concealed battery, and the Electric Horse began to move away swiftly, and the attached vehicle glided after it.

"Who is outwitted now!" shouted Frank, Jr., back at the enemy.

"The nagurs an' their friends! American brains forever! Shure, Masther Frank, if yez hadn't thought av the battery yez hid away out av sight so cunningly, it's goners we'd be now intirely, begob!" cried Barney.

CHAPTER XL.

SUN MOUNTAINS—UNDER THE GREAT THIRD FIN-GER.

THE surprise of the explorers' enemies may be imagined when they saw the Electric Horse and Carriage move swiftly away.

The enraged Plata turned fiercely upon the Portuguese, and upbraided him severely.

The half-breed retorted in the same way, and the quarrel threatened to culminate in blows when the old Tienunas chief interposed, saying:

"We must not fall out among ourselves. The white men who have fled are great witch doctors, and their magic is too strong for us. The sacred cube is lost to us."

Both Plata and the half-breed understood the language of the Tienunas, and they realized the wisdom of his words.

"After all the legend of the cube may be only a myth," said the half-breed.

"What is the history of it as known to your tribe?" asked Plata of the Tienunas chief.

"The story has been handed down among the wise men of the Tienunas for years and years since first the white men came to our land. It is said that the Peruvians fleeing from the white invaders into Brazil brought with them vast treasures of gold which they secreted. The Tienunas king befriended the Peruvians, and their priests made him believe in their faith which finally became the faith of the Tienunas, who, to this day, worship the sun. A great plague came, and the people died in multitudes. The Peruvians were new to our Amazon climate, and they were first to perish. When the great priest of the 'Children of the Sun,' who had brought the treasure of gold from Peru, was stricken and about to die he called the king of the Tienunas and his wise men to his side, and told them that he would bequeath to them a sacred cube, which had been blessed by the high priest of the sun worshipers, and which contained the secret of the hiding-place of the treasure of the Peruvians which he formally gave to the Tienunas, saying it would make our tribe the richest one in all Brazil.

"Then the dying Peruvian went on to tell that the cube was in the keeping of the priest of the people whose office it was to act as the treasurer of the temple whence the gold treasure came. He sent for that priest to come to him and surrender the cube to the Tienunas. But the priest did not appear, and search being made for him it was found that he had secretly fled toward Peru. Pursuit was made but neither the priest or the sacred cube was ever discovered.

"Then the great prophet of the Tienunas had a strange vision which he revealed to his tribe saying: 'The Tienunas shall not become great among the tribes of the land until the sacred cube is brought back, and the treasure of which it tells found, and he who shall recover the sacred cube shall become the king of all the Amazon tribes, and live in splendor, and in the enjoyment of vast wealth all his days.'"

Such was the history of the ancient cipher cube as handed down in the legends of the Amazon tribe.

So we see that the old Tienunas chief had the most powerful incentive to make every effort to acquire possession of the cipher cube.

But now he despaired of ever wresting it from the explorers, and yet he was loath to turn back.

But now the other chiefs of the pampas league who had followed the explorers declared they would pursue them no further, and finally the old Tienunas, who was the leading spirit of the league, was obliged to consent to return to the Amazon country with them.

Plata said he was going southward to the diamond fields with his band, and the Portuguese half-breed agreed to accompany the pampas robbers.

Not long after the departure of the electric conveyance the Tienunas chiefs and their robber allies separated.

The former set out upon the long journey back to the lands of their tribe, disappointed and weary.

The pampas robbers took the route to the diamond fields.

But they did not proceed far in that direction.

As soon as the Tienunas chiefs were out of sight and well on their homeward way the robbers faced about.

The cunning and treacherous rascals had no intention of going to the diamond land.

On the contrary, they had determined to continue the pursuit of the explorers, and try to recover the ancient cube claimed by the Tienunas, as soon as they were rid of the natives.

The cupidity of the robbers was aroused.

They meant that no effort should be spared to gain for themselves the golden treasure of the ancient Peruvians.

Returning to the trail of the Electric Horse, the robbers followed it.

Meanwhile, owing to the fact that the recently submerged valley of the Purus river was left in a bad condition for travelers, the explorers did not proceed very swiftly.

The soil had been rendered so soft and yielding by the action of the water that, notwithstanding the width of their tires, the wheels of the Electric Carriage sank quite deeply in some places, and thus retarded the speed of the travelers.

But they reached the Purus river and ferried the Electric Horse and Carriage across it on a raft constructed from timbers sawed by electricity.

It was now the policy of the robbers to lull the explorers into a feeling of security by not permitting them to discover that they were still pursued.

They kept out of sight of the explorers, but they followed them with the tenacity of bloodhounds on a fresh trail.

Beyond the Purus the country gradually became a rolling upland, and hills were soon discovered in the distance.

Corrajo, upon sighting the hills, cried:

"We shall soon reach 'Sun Mountains.' They are really lofty hills, but to the pampas-dwellers, who named them by contrast with the level plains to which they were accustomed, no doubt they seemed like real mountains."

The entire party was consumed with curiosity now that the fruition of their hopes and the accomplishment of the object which had caused them to undertake the perilous journey through the wilds of South America seemed likely to occur.

As the Purus river and the recently submerged district was left behind the electric conveyance increased its speed.

A day or two later, during which time little in the way of adventure took place, the gaucho announced that the *three fingers* of Sun Mountains were in sight.

For some time the explorers had been running along the range searching for the great landmark which indicated the site of the lost treasure of the ancient Peruvians.

Frank, Jr., took the telescope through which Corrajo had discovered the landmark they were in search of, and looking through the glass he saw at some distance to the southward a tall, rocky hill from near the summit of which three great ledges of rock protruded, which in their outlines somewhat resembled the fingers of a human hand.

"At last we have found the site of the part of the lost treasure hidden in Brazil. Of that there is no doubt," cried Frank.

The electric conveyance soon arrived at the foot of the tall hill under the three fingers of rock.

It was then seen that the third of the three fingers, counting from the southward, was much larger than either of the others.

"The finger furthest to the northward must be the 'great finger' mentioned in the cipher," said Frank, Jr.

"Yes, and now to search for the treasure!" cried Dr. Vaneyke.

The party alighted, and Frank, Jr., and Corrajo staked off a space, which included an area of a number of square feet, and comprised within it all the surface at the foot of the hill under the great finger of rock.

Then, provided with sharp iron bars, the explorers began sounding the earth everywhere within the space which they believed must contain the hidden treasure.

But after hours of labor they found nothing to reward them.

Then Frank, Jr., suggested that they try mining the rocky hillside under the great finger. The proposition met with approval.

The party got out the drills for mining rock and the blasting cartridges filled with giant-powder.

The drills were to be worked by electricity, and they were provided with frames and appliances precisely like those of steam drills, such as are ordinarily used in the mining regions of the United States.

The only material difference between the electric drills and those run by steam was in the machinery.

The drills were of the finest tempered steel, and very sharp. They were soon set up, and the attachments made with the electric battery in the carriage.

Then the work of mining the rocky hillside began in earnest. The drills worked perfectly, and deep holes for the reception of the cartridges which were to blast away the rock were speedily made.

The cartridges were then properly placed and tamped down. They were exploded by electricity, and the rocks were blown out from the hillside in great blocks.

When the smoke of the first blast cleared away the explorers hastened forward to see the result, and they saw that the mouth of a narrow passage leading into the hillside was revealed.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE FIRST TREASURE FOUND—THE ARRIVAL OF PLATA'S BAND—A RACE.

"I THINK the treasure is almost within our grasp now," cried Dr. Vaneyke.

"Yes. It looks as though the mouth of this cave had been walled up by the hands of men, and that the earth, washing down from the hillside, covered it, while the rocks settled, during the course of years, and became almost as solid as a natural formation," said Mr. Reade, Sr.

"I agree with you," assented the doctor.

"Now we must explore the cave," said Frank, Jr.

Barney had already brought a lighted mine lamp from the Electric Carriage.

"Bedad, I'll lead the way wid the light," he said.

"All right," answered Frank, Jr.

Barney advanced into the cave.

The others followed him, and at but a few feet from the entrance the passage widened out into an underground chamber of considerable extent.

In this chamber the explorers beheld a sight of dazzling splendor. Heaped upon the floor were strangely shaped vessels, bars and blocks of solid gold.

"Hurrah! Bedad here's a fortune for every mother's son of us!" cried Barney.

"Golly! I'll buy de hull of America wid my share. Deed I will, suah!" said Pomp.

"There is gold enough to make us all wealthy though we were not worth a red cent in the world," affirmed the doctor.

"Can we carry it?" he added.

"Carry it? Bedad o'ill carry my share on me back, be gob, an' walk home, if the ould wagon can't hold it," said Barney.

"We can carry the treasure. I mean to throw away some of the implements and contrivances which I brought along, for which I do not apprehend there will be any further need," said Frank, Jr.

"In that way you will make room for the treasure," said the doctor.

"Yes. If we have to unload everything the locker contains we'll not leave the treasure behind."

"Well, we may as well get to work," said Mr. Reade, Sr.

"Yes. We'll load the Electric Carriage with the treasure at once," said Frank, Jr.

Then they set about doing this.

But as Barney was lifting the first block of gold, an unearthly scream rang through the cave. "Worra, worra! Bedad, the feller that hid the gold is guardin' it!" cried Barney.

Dropping the block of gold he fled in terror.

"Yah, yah! Irish am scared of a monkey! Youse no good, Barney!" cried Pomp.

He had seen a large ape, which uttered the cry that alarmed the Irishman as the latter fled.

The large monkey advanced from the interior of the cave, and the explorers presumed that there was some other entrance beside the one they had found.

Barney halted as soon as he heard Pomp's taunting remark.

Then he, too, saw the ape.

All the party laughed at Barney's comical sheepish look.

That made him mad, and he cried:

"It's insultin' an Irish gentleman the nagur haz been doin' onct too often, bedad!"

Barney made a rush at Pomp as he spoke.

But the savage ape thought he meant to attack him, it seemed, for he uttered a snarling scream, and with a bound alighted on the Irishman's back.

"Ough! worra—worra! Take off the ugly creature!" roared Barney, while the ape twined his fingers in his hair and pulled lustily.

Pomp ran up and dealt the ape a blow on the head with a rock, which caused him to fall to the floor.

"Be dad, that was well done, Pomp. Yez are a colored gentleman!" cried Barney.

But in the next breath he added:

"Get off me feet, ye blunderin' blackguard yez!"

Pomp had accidentally stepped on Barney's pet corn, and the Irishman gave him a push as he spoke that sent him reeling away.

Then the ducky got mad.

"Dat's w'at a gemman gits fo' helpin' Irish trash. I doan't allow no white man to shove me. No, sah! I'se gittin' up steam, I is, suah!" cried Pomp.

He began to duck his head about.

"Hold on! We don't care to witness a row just now. To work, both of you. No more of this!" said Mr. Reade, Sr., sternly.

"Wait till youse outside, dat's all," grumbled Pomp.

"I'd bate the head av yez, if it wan't for the masher, be gob!" retorted Barney.

But there were no further hostilities between the two just then.

The explorers all lent willing hands to the task of transferring the treasure to the electric carriage.

The work was soon accomplished, and then as the explorers were about to resume their journey in the direction indicated by the dotted lines on the map, copied from the ancient ciper cube, a volley of musketry suddenly rang out, and a shower of bullets whistled about them.

Frank, Jr., was at the engineer's post on deck.

Pomp and Barney were also on the top of the electric vehicle.

Mr. Reade, Sr., and the others were in the interior of the vehicle.

As the volley of shots were discharged Plata, the pampas robber, and his men made a sudden and desperate charge from the shelter of a ledge of rocks where they had been concealed.

As the detonation of the fusillade rang out Frank, Jr., uttered a sharp cry and fell heavily upon the deck.

"Worra, worra! The young masher is kilt!" cried Barney.

The fall of Frank, Jr., delayed the start of the Electric Horse, and the swift charge of the robbers brought them to the electric carriage before the electric battery of Winchester rifles could be discharged.

With wild yells of exultation they seized the side-rail which ran around the vehicle on a level with the floor.

Then Mr. Reade, Sr., as the outlaws tried to climb up to the deck, turned on the electricity, and it flashed along the rail to which the enemy clung, shocking them terribly and causing them to tumble about in all directions, just as the Indians did when they were shocked in the same way.

As the enemy received the electric shock Frank, Jr., staggered to his feet, seized the main lever and started the Electric Horse.

The young inventor had been knocked senseless by a passing bullet, which had grazed his head.

"Whoop! Masher Frank is all right yit, praise the saints!" cried Barney in delight as he saw Frank, Jr., arise.

The Electric Horse and carriage quickly acquired momentum, and in a few moments it was moving rapidly.

But as the carriage was passing under a ledge of rocks a rumbling sound was heard above the explorers' heads.

They glanced upwards and saw a great boulder dashing down the hill-side toward them, while a number of men belonging to Plata's band were discovered further up the hill, and our friends knew that the great rock had been started on its downward course through their agency.

There was great danger that the huge rock would strike the electric carriage and demolish it. The robbers who had been hurled from the carriage by the electric shock were now in pursuit of it.

To stop the Electric Horse would be to allow the pursuers to overtake it. Frank, Jr., in an instant resolved to crowd on all possible speed, and attempt to pass the place where the great rock must strike the level at the foot of the hill.

The route of the explorers lay through a defile, and, therefore, they could not turn aside to avoid the loosened boulder. They were compelled either to keep on or stop.

Frank, Jr., carefully measured with his eye the distance to be traversed before the place where the boulder must strike the trail could be passed, and he thought it possible that the electric conveyance might get by the point of danger before the boulder struck the trail.

He estimated the relative speed of both the descending rock and the Electric Horse before he resolved to try a race with the former.

It was a moment of intense and thrilling suspense for the imperiled explorers as the electric conveyance dashed forward and the boulder continued the swift descent of the hillside.

CHAPTER XLII.

AMONG THE ANDES—CONCLUSION OF THE GREAT JOURNEY.

THE exultant shouts of the robbers told that they thought the electric conveyance was rushing to its doom.

But with bated breath and hearts pulsating with excitement, the explorers kept their eyes fixed upon the descending boulder as they sped forward, and they were all ready to leap from the vehicle if they could not pass the great rock.

A moment which seemed like an age to the imperiled ones elapsed, and then a great shout went up from them which was mingled with the sound of a terrific crash, as the huge boulder struck the trail but a few feet behind the on-rushing electric carriage.

They had passed the rock just in time, but the escape was a narrow one. The faces of the heroic band were pale with alarm as they swept onward beyond the peril which was passed.

Frank, Jr., did not decrease the speed of the electric conveyance until they were out of sight and hearing of their enemies.

Then he moderated the rapid movements of the Electric Horse, and while mutual congratulations at the result of the race with the boulder passed between the party, the young inventor

and Corrajo took observations with the telescope and consulted the map which Dr. Vaneyke had copied from the cipher cube.

A course which they believed corresponded with the dotted line on the map which connected the two arrows was then taken, and the compass was called into service to enable them accurately to maintain the desired direction.

The wonderful journey was continued for hours, and no halt was made until Corrajo discovered a band of natives approaching in the distance.

After taking a look at them through the telescope the gaucho announced that there was nothing to fear from them, saying:

"They are friendly Chaco Indians. Never very warlike, they were long ago converted by the Jesuit missionaries, and have become quite civilized. They are husbandmen, tillers of the soil and cattle raisers. At the time of the conquest of Peru by Pizarro many Peruvians, fleeing from the barbarous cruelty of the Spanish invaders, sought asylum with these natives, and from them they, the Chacos, learned many arts of civilized life."

"I have heard that the Chacos are famed for their skill in feather-work," said Mr. Reade, Sr.

"Such is the fact. In plume-embroidery, which is an art unknown to more civilized people, the Chaco Indians excel. When the rude soldiers under Cortez and Pizarro first saw their feather-work, they were astonished and delighted with it," said Dr. Vaneyke.

"If we continue in our present course we shall soon approach quite near the Chacos we have discovered, and perhaps we may then have an opportunity of seeing some of their wonderful feather-embroidery," remarked Corrajo.

"Then we will improve the chance," said Frank, Jr.

They soon came up with the natives, who seemed to be alarmed and inclined to run away and avoid the meeting.

But Corrajo, who spoke their language, reassured them, and they came up to the electric vehicle which was stopped. The explorers were not disappointed about the feather-work. The Indians exhibited some designs in plume-embroidery which were wonders of beauty and artistic skill, and the adventurers purchased all the beautiful work the Chacos would part with.

That same day the travelers arrived at a water-course, and as Corrajo declared no alligators

were found in it Barney resolved to have a bath.

But no sooner had the Irishman taken a plunge and swam a short distance than he began to thrash about in the water leaping and yelling at the top of his voice.

"Arrah! worra! It's full av snakes charged with lightning the wather is! Ough! ough! Bad luck to the cratures! They hev me paralyzed all over!"

Barney made for the shore as fast as he could. His antics made all his friends laugh, and Pomp, as usual, particularly enjoyed Barney's discomfiture.

"Electric eels!" cried Corrajo.

"Yes. They abound in the streams here. No wonder Barney took them for snakes charged with lightning," said Doctor Vaneyke.

Barney reached the shore in a moment. One of the electric eels was coiled about his leg, and pulling it off Barney hurled it into the face of Pomp, who was laughing the loudest of any one.

The darky received a shock that made him dance, and his laughter ended in a yell of pain.

Barney was evidently bent upon having "a bit of a ruction" with Pomp, but Frank, Jr., interposed and prevented a fight.

After this the explorers' journey was continued uneventfully until they entered Peru and came in sight of the Andes. Far above them towered the snowy peaks of the great range, their summits almost concealed by the fleecy clouds.

The next thing was to find "the black ledges and the sealed mine" which contained the remainder of the lost treasure of the Peruvians.

Corrajo knew the Andes country almost as well as the pampas of Brazil, for he had served as a guide in that country, and, following a course he indicated, three days later the explorers came to a vast series of ledges of black rocks in the side of the Andes.

"Here we are! These are the only black ledges I know of in Peru," said Corrajo.

"And yonder above the ledges is the peak of an ancient volcano," he added, pointing.

Without delay the search for the sealed mines was commenced, and after a quest which occupied several hours Frank, Jr., discovered a series of wide cracks in the black rocks which, upon tracing them up, he found formed a perfect square some ten feet each way.

Frank had become separated from his friends, but just after he made the discovery which he

thought indicated the mouth of a sealed mine he saw them approaching.

At almost the same moment Frank, Jr., felt the mountain tremble under his feet, as if in internal convulsions. He glanced upward, and saw a dense smoke ascending from the peak of the old volcano. Then the sky darkened, and a shower of earth and pebbles fell about the young inventor.

"Heavens!" he shouted, "there is an eruption of the volcano!"

Frank knew that he was in danger of being overwhelmed by burning lava, and he fled. Joining his friends, they all beat a hasty retreat.

The volcano continued in a state of eruption for several days, during which time our friends remained encamped at a safe distance. When the eruption subsided they visited the square in the "black ledge" discovered by Frank, Jr., and discovered that the convulsions of the mountain had hurled outward a series of rocks, which had closed up the entrance to an old mine. They entered it, but found, upon advancing a short distance, that the heat became so intense that they could not endure it. They also discovered that their advance was blocked by a pit of volcanic flames, and they concluded that the crater of the volcano had broken through the rocks into the old mine and carried the lost treasure of the Peruvians down into its unknown fiery depths, whence the hand of mortal man could never rescue them.

But our explorers were well satisfied with the gold they had found, and they at once set out for Lima.

The Peruvian capital was reached in safety, and thence the explorers went to Callao, and there the great journey of the Electric Horse across the continent of South America ended. The gold was secretly packed in cases, as was also the Electric Horse and carriage, and everything was shipped for New York on board a fast steamer upon which all the party took passage.

The voyage to New York was made in safety, and in due time the party reached home, where a warm welcome from friends and relatives awaited them.

During the return voyage Mr. Reade, Sr., noticed that Frank, Jr., and the old doctor were talking together a great deal in a rather private way, and he shrewdly suspected they were considering some plan for another great expedition.

[THE END.]

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